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Return *

BY LUIGI PIRANDELLO.

BACK again in the dreary hill-top village where he was born, Paolo Marra understood that his father's ruin must have begun at the moment when he had left off building houses for other people, and begun to build one for himself. The thought came to him when he looked at the house, no longer his, where he had lived for a while as a boy—a house planted in one of those high and narrow ancient streets, all running down the hillside at the same precipitous angle, like the dried-up beds of torrents, paved with cobbles.

All the desolation was embodied in the spectacle of the arched and doorless doorway, that stood between the walls that were once to have shut in the great courtyard, overtopping them by nearly a yard—ragged red stone walls, old, and still unfinished. Through the arch was the courtyard, sloping and cobbled like the street, with a great well in the middle. The iron bar upholding the pulley was still in place, but the paint on it, once of a reddish colour, was now almost entirely eaten away by rust. A sad thing to see, that crumbling iron hoop, that seemed sick beneath its scars of paint and decay; sick, too, of the melancholy creaking of the pulley-wheels, when the wind at night moved the bucket-rope, and above the empty luminosity of the courtyard overlaid with dust hung, as though fixed there for eternity, a luminous square of sky, misty and filled with stars.

* From the volume of short stories "Tutt'e Tre," Florence, 1924.

His father's wish had been to build this courtyard between the house and the street; then, seeing the uselessness of the scheme, he must have abandoned it, leaving the empty door-frame and the unfinished walls.

At first no passers-by had tried to enter, because the earth was still strewn with stones ready for laying, and it seemed that the building was only interrupted for a little, and might be taken up again. But as soon as grass began to sprout between the cobbles under the wall, these stones all at once took on a look of being crumbled and old. Some of them had been carted away when, after his father's death, the house had been sold to three separate owners, and the courtyard left a kind of no-man's-land; and the rest had become seats for the gossips of the neighbourhood, who now looked on the courtyard and the water of the well as their own, and used to wash there and spread their clothes to dry, and, when the sheets stretched out on the stones and the shirts flapping from the lines showed glaring white in the sunshine, would loosen their hair, shining with oil, upon their shoulders and painstakingly search their heads, one for the other, as monkeys do.

The street had, in fact, absorbed the courtyard, which had no door to shut it out.

And Paolo Marra, seeing the invasion for the first time, and the doorsill under the arch worn down, and the pilasters chipped, and the paving destroyed by the wheels of carts and ploughs that had been stabled in the once clean and airy barns beside the house (reduced long since to the occupation of filthy tenants)—Paolo Marra, oppressed by the reek of garbage and rotten straw, with a foul black stream of rinsing water running between his feet as it trickled over the cobbles into the street, felt rise in him a surge of pain and revulsion in place of that secret and voluptuous sense of fear, which in the distant memory of his childhood had clothed the courtyard, when at night it was empty and deserted, with the deep star-filled sky stretched over the livid whiteness of the cobbles, and the well in the centre a mysteriously splendid thing.

Women and urchins gathered round him to stare, gaping at the old trailing coat he wore, which together with his clumsy spectacles and ragged fringe of hair reaching almost to his

humped shoulders, seemed to him consistent with his calling of a schoolmaster, but which in reality gave him the appearance of a strange and rusty evangelical pastor from overseas. And when they saw him turn away with all his disgust stamped on his pallid face, they broke into titters and guffaws of laughter.

Standing there, his anger urged him to stride back into the courtyard, of which he was still rightful master, and drag these women, one after the other, from the piles of stones, and drive them out before him, into the street. But used now to reflect before his actions, he paused. If they saw in him merely a stranger, somewhat grotesque perhaps, a man grown old and ugly before his time through a life of painful study and misfortune—but still a stranger, and not the boy he had once been and that some of them might still remember, he would do better to renounce his rights over the place they had usurped than stir up for himself all the pain of his old memories. One of these memories alone sufficed to quench his impulse to fling himself against these women—the memory, still burning, of his mother, leaving this house for ever, holding him by one hand and with the other drawing over her face a fold of the black handkerchief that covered her head, to hide her crying and the fearful bruises from her husband's blows.

He, as a boy, had been the cause of those bruises, and of the irremediable breach between husband and wife that had followed, and of his mother's death, of heart-break, scarcely a year later ; he who, in his folly, had set himself up, then fourteen years old, as his mother's champion against his father, who had betrayed her ; for he had not understood, as now, as a man, he understood, that his mother, horribly disfigured from her babyhood, by a fall from a window, was obliged to bear this betrayal if she was to continue to exist in the same house as her husband. To him, her son, she had naturally embodied what was Mother. He could not have conceived another or a different one. He felt himself enwrapped and caressed by the infinite tenderness that shone forth from those eyes, which might still have been beautiful, jet-black as they were, had they not been edged with a bloodless red that showed above the underlids dragged down, together with the whole sockets and the cheeks, into the scarred and ruinous cavity of the frightful wound, from which only the end of the nose

emerged. And all the mother love, animal and spiritual, he heard in her voice, without caring that it seemed to come, half-stifled, from her nostrils, rather than from her poor monstrous mouth. He knew that his father, risen from the gutter, had become lord and master to her ; and it maddened him to see her not only renounce every shred of claim to gratitude, but actually ready and willing to lay her face—that scarred and tragic face—where he had set his foot. It maddened him to see his father use her as a slave, while she showed in every act and every movement the tremulous gratitude of a tamed and broken beast, always afraid of not being quick enough to anticipate his every need and wish, or to clutch to her some absent-minded crumb of kindness as though it were a blessiug far beyond her deserts. He was only six years old, and still he revolted, and tore himself away in a passion when his mother would have shown him to this woman or to that, who upbraided her for her too great submission. He would thrust his fingers into his ears, so as not to hear from the next room the words that always accompanied the gesture cut short by his flight —the explanation that she had a son, and that, considering her calamity, was an undreamed-of blessing for God to have vouchsafed to her.

He was too young still to understand that she put forward and dwelt upon her son in order to hide perhaps from herself, as well as others, the indescribable misery of her flesh that had had to beg love from this man, though she well knew him to be owned and possessed by another woman, and though she missed no whit of the repulsion with which, every once in a while, the tremendous charity was conceded. She felt that in the sight of all she must justify herself, and be cleansed of this degradation suffered for her son.

Finally it came to his knowledge that his father had taken up with a widow, a woman of the people, a certain Nuzza La Dia, who had once been his betrothed, but whom he had abandoned in order to marry a girl of higher standing than himself, and with a good fortune—endurable, if hideous, since she was the daughter of the engineer who had helped him to make his way, and who, having had his collaboration for so long, had finally made him a partner in all his concerns.

He knew that every Sunday morning the pair of them used

to meet in the little parlour of the Convent of S. Vicenzo, where an aunt of theirs was abbess. They used to pretend to go and visit her, and the old abbess, who was content to find in their relationship sufficient cause for the tender intimacy between them, used to enjoy the sight of them sitting opposite each other at the little table before her double grill—he, become a gentleman, with his blue Sunday suit that seemed always stretched to bursting by his great shoulders, and the hard collar that threatened to strangle his purplish throat, and a red tie ; and she, brimming with obvious sensual delight, but quiet and placid with satisfaction, dressed in some black stuff gown, all twinkling with bits of gold in the severe and churchlike gloom of the little parlour. Mouthful by mouthful, one for him, one for her, they nibbled at the innocent confections of the convent, and drank, a sip for her, a sip for him, little glasses of the convent's pallid red wine. And they laughed together until even the old abbess aunt, planted like a wax-work behind her grating, was melted into smiles.

One of these Sundays he went to take them off their guard. His father had just time to hide behind a green curtain that covered a side-door, but the curtain was short, and under the hem, still swinging slightly, stuck out his great shining Sunday boots. She sat where she was, beside the table, with the little glass still between her fingers, in the act of raising it to her lips. He had planted himself in front of her, and drawing his head well back, had spat full in her face. His father had not moved behind the curtain. Nor, when he got home, had he spoken a word to him, nor touched a hair of his head. He had taken his revenge upon the mother—beaten her till she bled, and driven her from the door ; then he had taken the whore publicly into his house, and had done with the mother and the son for ever. The mother had died a year after, and he had been put to school in another place. He had never seen his father again.

Now, on this homecoming, after all these years, he had not been recognised by a soul. Only one human being had spoken to him, of whose identity he had no idea—a tiny man muffled up in a huge cloak, so small a creature as to be almost laughable in that great shroud. Very mysteriously this being had beckoned him apart and begun to speak, scarcely above a

whisper, of the house and of his right to possess the courtyard, or, if he did not want it himself, to relinquish it in favour of a certain poor woman whom it would be God's own charity to repay for the love and devotion she had lavished on his father, and for the care she had shown him right up to the end when, paralysed and dumb, he had been reduced to want; a certain Nuzza La Dia she was, and in the end she had begged his bread; and now, homeless, she dragged herself here every night, to sleep in a cellar under the stairs.

Paolo Marra turned and gazed at the little man as if he had been the devil incarnate. And the little man, in response to his look, had suddenly screwed his features up into a grin and winked in a manner that was actually diabolical—as if he had been the devil in person who had thrown the mother from the window as a child, to deform her, and made this Nuzza La Dia beautiful for the temptation of his father, and led him, as a boy, to spit in her face and so bring destruction upon them all.

And the devil, when he had winked, wrapped himself up with much furling and unfurling in his crazy cloak, and went away.

Paolo Marra knew that this fancy of his was nothing but his imagination, prone to work easily because now, for some time past, he had felt a twinge of remorse at having let his father die in desperation, without a word from him. Now, standing there, he felt the twinge again; but he drove it from him with a spasm of hatred; and the hatred, too, he knew not to be all real, but mixed, within him, with some other feeling which he had always shrunk from defining to himself, for fear of hurting the most grievous of all his memories—the memory of his mother. Now, even about this too, hitherto a thing of purest misery, was woven and intertwined a sense of uttermost degradation and shame; for no sooner did he call up the wretched and tortured face of his mother than there rose up automatically beside it the face of the other woman, unsullied and beautiful, and the unescapable memory of how she had looked on that morning, with his spittle still hanging on her cheek—a little uncertain smile of surprise and happiness about her parted lips, with the white teeth showing between, and all the sorrow, all the sorrow in the world in her eyes.

Translated by ADA HARRISON.

Poems

By EDMUND BLUNDEN.

By Road.

Who knows not that sweet gloom in spring,
That waiting gloom, that grave delight
In coming bloom,
In the first flight
Of bird, or thought, so wild of wing ?

Now when round hedgerow's earthy claws
And painted shells that blanch near by
The dark grass swells
And from the eye
In buds each old black nest withdraws.

I well might go to my old haunt
And find the green brook brushing down
By celandine
And sedges brown
And hopper's-houses grimed and gaunt.

I well might go where the burnt ring
And rusty kettles year on year
Show life has yet
Her freedoms dear—
And I will go, another spring.

It may be, I shall then unfold
    Why with such thrill and venturous joy
    I crossed that rill,
    A hurrying boy,
One Lenten Sunday ages old.

The mild mysterious spring was there,
    The silk palm glowed, the vole peeped shy
    Beside the road
    Where you and I
Went on and blest the orchard air.

Then coming to the timbered cot
    Of your good friends, how deep it strook
    That he would lend
    His longed-for book—
Old Walton, which forthwith he got

And by the window gave to me.
    The apples in the window-sill,
    His humorous chin,
    I see them still,
I see his good wife getting tea.

But where's the mystery ? There it was ;
    And is it there ? And can I find
    Spring's dusk so fair
    Now that my mind
Looks far beyond such floating floss ?

O look not out : the young spring broods
    So wondering-warm on nest and bough,
    Her dark eyes charm,
    Her babe leaps now,
And godhead glistens in those woods.

" Thy Dreams Ominous."

Blest is the man that sees or hears
  The shuttles of the eternal weaver,
And shrieks not, sobs not savage tears,
  Burns not with fever.
He is a tree that's firmly planted
  Where a plunging cataract blanches,
Spreading there as though enchanted
  His lucky branches.

But what if I, whose different thews
  Scarce bear the dawning light unwincing,
Discovered in some curious clues
  Vision commencing ?
I should be drift wood, moon and sun
  In gulping, groaning water-gorges
Sucked down, shot high and snatched and spun
  Through timeless orgies.

Shepherd's Calendar.

When lambs were come, who could be slow and sear ?
When lambs were come, and each black thorny rod
Lit up with seraph birth and budded clear
Fresh as the lambs and clouds, and smiled at God ?
The clay-green from the river solved away
Till all was crystal ; who the crystal conned
Saw where blue pike with their wild lemans lay,
And by old ragstones the new waving frond.

And many a girl by tinkling pastures stood
With primrose brow toward eve's single gem,
And waited in the bright ethereal mood
For one who then would kiss her garment's hem,
Some don and darling of our rural sphere,
That now, this soon-come spring, goes slow and sear.

Misunderstandings

In the bright shallow of this broadened dyke,
Whose willow-wood, late chopt, gives now
Not one sweet shading bough,
See in the sun the two young mating pike
With golden strakes and dapplings fine
In mutual love themselves align ;
Where he and she together bask and dream,
There is no time but that, no other theme.

The flooded river hurled and flurried hoarse
With lashing branches and brown scum,
And yet the time was come.
These following love up a still lonely course
Reached this imagined bower, nor knew
The dwindled river far withdrew.
And now in unsuspicious love they lie
In the bright prison where they soon will die.

The mild wood-pigeon looked, and look she might,
For last year's willow-wood : 'twas gone !
She rose and floated on
To one near by ; and there in April light,
Her thin twigs set, sat warming two
Sweet eggs, that shone like roses through.
Man came, she startled ; he but looked and learned,
But to her frost-cold eggs she ne'er returned.

James Joyce: The Meaning of "Ulysses"

By EDWIN MUIR.

NO other novelist who has written in English has had a greater mastery than Mr. Joyce of language as an instrument of literary expression, and no one else, probably, has striven so consciously to attain it. "Dubliners" was an ideal apprentice piece for an artist; in it Mr. Joyce set himself to describe accurately the things he saw, attempting at the beginning what most writers achieve towards the end. "The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," marked a further stage. That book was as much a recreation of language as a record of experience. The marvellous dialogue which appeared first in it was not like the transcriptions of ordinary talk in "Dubliners"; it was a second language which was used consciously to vary and complete the lingual pattern of the work. That pattern of speech seemed complete in itself, a thing of different nature from, but as real as, the events and experiences, many of them sordid, which it described. There were thus two values in the novel, separate, yet necessary to each other: the value of language and that of life, the value of art and that of experience. To Mr. Joyce the first of these is pure, the second mixed. Art must descend into life, the word must seek out all it can and enter into it; yet, having entered into it, it returns and remains pure in the consciousness of the artist. Life cannot soil it, but only a disobedience of its own laws.

In the "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" Mr. Joyce acquired the mastery of language, the knowledge of and reverence for its mysteries, which prepared him for "Ulysses." He learnt, too, for the second time, the strict realism which, because it demands perfect exactitude in the rendering, is valuable as a discipline, makes an intensive demand on the

artist's powers of expression, and by putting a strain on them enhances them. In embracing this realism he discarded the facile sensibility of his time, which was occupied only with the secondary phenomena of consciousness—with the psychological effect of the object rather than the object, with distinctions rather than with things—and which in that preoccupation while seizing the shadow lost the substance. " The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man " not only left Mr. Joyce with a greater command over English than any other novelist had possessed ; it was as well a sort of self-inoculation against a sensibility grown burdensome. Without either of these " Ulysses " could never have been written. For in " Ulysses " the dual values of " The Portrait," the values of life and art, of reality and imagination, are developed side by side until each attains its maximum of expression, and the discrepancy between them issues in a form of humour which through its intellectual profundity becomes universal. It is a humour not of fashion, nor of character, but of the processes of life, those processes which create history and produce religions and civilisations while leaving the great part of the human race, the average sensual man outside us and within us, spiritually unchanged and apparently spiritually unchangeable. It sets forth the dreams of religion, the magic of language, the splendours of the intellect, the revolutions of history, over against the simple facts : the naïvety of physical desire, the functions of the body, the triviality of the floating thoughts the body sends up into our minds. A theme so tremendous could only be expressed in great tragedy or great comedy, could only in one of these two ways be lifted into a plane where it no longer overwhelms us, and where having passed through it we are freed from its worst oppression. Had Mr. Joyce not inoculated himself against sensibility by an overdose of realism he could never have attained this emancipating comic vision of the entire modern world. Had he not been so sensitive that he suffered monstrously from his sensibility his comedy would have had no driving power behind it. One feels again and again in " Ulysses " that the uproariousness of the farce, the recklessness of the blasphemy, is wildest where the suffering of the artist has been most intense. A writer whose sufferings were so great and so conscious needed a more elaborate technique

than most writers do, as much to put a distance between himself and his sufferings as to express them.

"Dubliners" and "The Portrait" were a necessary preparation, an apprenticeship strengthening the artist against life. They were exercises working out a part of Mr. Joyce's problem; but in "Ulysses" the whole problem is faced and to the extent of Mr. Joyce's present powers resolved. That problem must needs have been the problem of all the things from which he suffered, for the sincere artist is distinguished from the rest by the fact that his essential concern is with the things which make him suffer, the things, in other words, which stand between him and freedom. There is thus a necessary and an organic relation between him and his work, to create being, as Ibsen said, an act of emancipation. But when, as in "Ulysses," the creation is encyclopædic, when it attempts to gain freedom not from one but all the bonds, all the suffering, of the artist's soul, the impulse from which it started becomes a part of the autobiography of the book as well as of the writer. What Mr. Joyce suffered from in writing "Ulysses" was obviously in its completeness the life he had known; our modern world in all its intellectual manifestations as well as in its full banality; in its beliefs, its hopes, its charities, its reverences; its religion, patriotism, humanitarianism, science, literature, politics; its illusions as well as its realities. How could the full volume of all those burdensome hopes, theories, sensibilities, banalities, cruelties, meannesses, sensualities, be rendered in a work of art? Obviously not in a story, an action having a beginning, a development, a climax and an end, but rather in a record of the most obvious unit of time in which all these could manifest themselves, in that unit of time which begins with something recalling birth and ends in something resembling death: in a day. "Ulysses" is a complete course, a set banquet, of the modern consciousness. And being that no other unit could have served; the author could not have got into the record of a year what he has got into the record of a day.

But this banquet of the modern consciousness was to be a comic summing up as well as a banquet; it was to be not only abundant, but so burdensomely, absurdly abundant that all the courses would be made to appear ridiculous, as Rabelais

made the courses of the medieval banquet ridiculous. And as Mr. Joyce's encyclopædic plan justified the time unit of his chronicle, so his comic intention justified the minuteness of his portrayal, his huge accumulation of imaginative material. His humour is one on side, like that of Rabelais, a piling up of one burden on the mind after another until the breaking point is reached—the breaking point of laughter. It operates by oppressing us consciously with all the things which oppress us unconsciously, and by exaggerating all this until it seems ridiculous that we should bear it, or more exactly that it should exist at all. A sense of this or that anomaly in social relations, the sense which finds expression in polite comedy, is far too light to shift this immense weight. To do that comedy must include as many factors as the greatest tragedy ; it must embrace not only man, but all that he believes in, the whole anthropomorphic cosmos. But even when the absurdities of the spirit are piled up in this way they are still not in the realm of universal comedy : the last touch is still wanting. That is given by a running contrast between the vast symbols invented by man and his simple earthy reactions, between the extravagance of belief and the simplicity of fact, the decency of civilised life and the unseemliness of instinct. That was the mainspring of Rabelais' humour, and it is also that of Mr. Joyce's. The more absurd and minute the description of physiological reactions, the greater obviously the effect. On the one hand an infinite immensity, on the other an infinitesimal smallness ; the intellectual dreams and spiritual struggles of Stephen Dedalus in the one balance, the vagaries of Leopold Bloom's instincts in the other ; around us the phantoms our minds have created, and within us the utilitarian functions of our bodies. And as the intellectual shapes which man has conceived to be first a release and then a burden are exaggerated, so his physical idiosyncrasies, his trifling thoughts, are refined upon. There is in Mr. Joyce's obscenity as in that of Rabelais an intellectual quality, as if in searching the recondite secrets of the natural processes of the body he were trying to penetrate to an unconscious humour of the cells, of those elementary principles of life which have built up not only the body but all this phantasmal structure which we call thought, religion and civilisation. His emphasis on the un-

seemly, on what, in other words, we have surpassed, depend upon, and wish to forget, is, at any rate, a necessary element in this kind of humour and an essential part of the plan of "Ulysses." It is perverse, that is to say, intellectualised deliberately, but so it had to be to achieve its purpose.

The vision of the world whose mainspring is in this radical sense of contrast is one which, if it did not issue in humour, would be nightmare. In "Ulysses" it does not always issue in humour. The brothel scene is horrible partly because it is a mis-shapen birth, because, conceived as a grand example of the humour of horror, it attains, through its failure, an atmosphere of horror which because it is unintentional is strictly monstrous, and incapable of being resolved either into art or into human experience. This scene is a work of genius; it is more astonishing than anything else Mr. Joyce has written; but it has the portentous appearance of something torn from the womb of imagination, not the completeness of something born of it. We derive from it a vivid notion of the monstrous suffering through which the artist is passing; but here he has not passed beyond it; and we suffer equally as participators in the horrors of a raw experience and as spectators of a heroic but unavailing attempt to escape from it and set it in the realm of freedom. Had Mr. Joyce succeeded with this gigantic scene he would have produced something supreme in literature and not merely something supremely astounding and terrifying. It was obviously designed to be the climax of the work; in it the last resources of the theme were to be brought on the stage; the unconscious desires which up to now had been allowed only a chance or oblique expression were to come nakedly to the surface and attain freedom. They do not attain freedom. The brothel scene is not a release of all the oppressions and inhibitions of life in our time; it is rather a gigantic attempt to attain release.

But if we grant this crucial failure in the book, and a number of minor failures, there remains more comedy in the grand style than has appeared in our literature since the Elizabethan age. The last chapter has been much praised, but there are others only less admirable. The scene in the pub. where Bloom is routed by the Citizen produces by an openly mechanical technique Mr. Joyce's sense of contrast between

an ordinary happening in all its banality and richness, and the fantastic and etiolated symbols which the desires of men and the conventions of literature discover for it. Here it is the obviousness of the means, the mechanical ease with which the simple event assumes conventional or lofty forms in the fancy that is at the root of the humour. We seem to see the illusions at their normal work. The banal fact and the fantastic interpretation are both present before our eyes, are both obvious and credible, the one arising spontaneously from the other, and are both ridiculous. The chapter of parodies, which has been so much criticised, is still more remarkable. There we see the figure of Mr. Bloom passing, as it were, through a comic pageant of the English spirit. In his progression he assumes a sort of absurd universality ; he is a man " of Israel's folk . . . that on earth wandering far had fared " ; he is " childe Leopold " and " sir Leopold that had for his cognisance the flower of quiet," and " Master Calmer," and " Leop. Bloom of Crawford's journal sitting snug with a covey of wags," and " Mr. L. Bloom (Pubb. Canv.)." He is a type, and a succession of types through history, and a multiplication of types in space ; one person in himself and many persons in time and in the minds of men. In this scene Mr. Joyce's comic imagination is at its height ; it raises Mr. Bloom into a legendary figure and gives him history and the world for his stage. But in doing that it fulfils once more the requirements of Mr. Joyce's humour, for to squat Mr. Bloom on the centre of that stage was to attain a comic vision of the world and of history.

What is it that through this use of contrast, this breaking of our resistances by accumulation, Mr. Joyce tries to set in the plane of low comedy ? First of all, professional seriousness of all kinds, and secondly the objects about which people are serious in this way : religion, to which the comic reaction is blasphemy ; patriotism, to which it is little less ; literature, to which it is parody ; the claims of science, to which it is an application of anti-climax ; sex, to which it is obscenity. When comedy attempts to become universal it has perforce to include blasphemy and obscenity, for these are the two poles of this comedy just as the soul and the body are the two poles of human existence. To see religion with the eyes of comedy

is not, of course, to laugh it out of existence, any more than to see sex comically is to destroy it. All that comedy can destroy is strictly the second-rate, everything that is not in its mode the best, everything less genuine than the genuine—a class of thoughts and emotions which make up the preponderating part of the experience of most people and of all ages, and is a permanent burden which at times may become unbearable. Books such as "Ulysses" and "Gargantua" can only be written out of an almost insupportable feeling of oppression; for humour on this scale the sense of oppression is needed as a driving power. The load of oppression which Rabelais cleared away we can see now clearly enough; it is more difficult to realise, although it is easy to feel, what it is that oppresses in our age a creative writer like Mr. Joyce. But when the reverences of any time are taken very seriously and not very intensely, when a belief in enlightenment, progress and humanity becomes habitual, and men act and think with a fearful eye on it and on the most mediocre of its priests, it has already become as injurious to the creative impulse as the strictest obscurantism could be. It is a weight of second-rate sentiment and thought, and the time comes when the only thing to be done is to clear it away.

To destroy so completely as Mr. Joyce does in "Ulysses" is to make a new start. Or more exactly, the new start must have been made before the destruction began, for the new thing destroys only that it may have room to grow in freedom. But what is new in this sense in "Ulysses" it is hazardous to attempt to say yet; for the things which are most new in it have a breath of an antiquity which seems to antedate the antiquity of classical literature, and to come out of a folk rather than a literary inspiration. Mr. Joyce's prostitutes in the brothel scene exist neither in the world of literature, as that world has been conceived almost since its beginning, nor in the world of fact. They are rather figures in a folk-lore which mankind continually creates, or rather carries with it, creations and types in the dream in which sensual humanity lives, and which to humanity is the visible world. This folk-lore, which is the aesthetic utterance of the illiterate classes, and of the illiterate parts of our nature, which co-exists with literature, but in a separate world, is not inarticulate; but it

expresses itself anonymously, and is such a constant attribute of human life that it rarely feels the need of the more permanent, the more specialised, expression of art. It attains its perfection from day to day by means which are as suited to its purposes as the means of literature are to the purposes of literature. Yet from it literature arose, for like literature, it is aesthetic, and has the freedom of perception which can only come when men are delivered from their utilitarian prejudices. And to it accordingly literature must periodically come back, as much to test as to renew itself. This is the world to which Mr. Joyce has in part returned, in part striven to return, in "Ulysses." He has seen, as only a profound theorist on art could have seen, that the sources of art lie here, that here is the primary division in our consciousness from which flow on the one hand the laws of art, and on the other the laws of the practical world in which we live. The great categories of literature, such as the pathetic, the tragic, and the comic, which with the interior development of literature tend ever to become more pure, more formal, Mr. Joyce has related to the loose and undifferentiated categories of popular imagination, and, starting from these, has set out to attain a more essential pathos, a more complete comedy, than the conventions of modern literature could have given him. He has not escaped the dangers of such an ambitious attempt. In "Ulysses" there are passages of unassimilated folk-lore which we feel do not belong to literature—diurnal phrases of Dublin talk which should not have survived the day, which, perfect in their time and place, get a false emphasis when set deliberately into the frame of a work of imagination. But where the attempt is successful, Mr. Joyce's imagination has a unique immediacy, a unique originality. In one glance we seem to see the life which he describes immediately before and immediately after he has set his seal upon it, and the transformation of reality into art takes place, as it were, under our eyes. Then we feel sometimes that in sweeping aside the aesthetic sense of three centuries, Mr. Joyce has penetrated to the aesthetic consciousness in itself, the aesthetic consciousness, that is to say, before it has become selective and exclusive, as the more it is developed and refined it tends to become, and still includes everything. It is, of course, obvious that the totality of the

responses of that consciousness cannot be rendered in literature, of which selection is not merely a virtue, but also the condition. Yet in the history of literature, as has often been shown, the principle of selection sometimes becomes a conventional, an arbitrary one, and, indeed, continually tends to do so ; and, therefore, it is at rare times necessary for the artist to put himself in a position where a fundamental act of selection becomes compulsory, and where he feels that every decision, whether to include or to reject, is significant not only on traditional grounds, but is made by his own unconditional volition and as if for the first time. " Ulysses " not only raises the problem of selection again ; in part, it answers it by bringing into literature things banished from it, as we now see more clearly, on moral and conventional rather than essential grounds In doing that, Mr. Joyce has both enriched literature and potentially widened its scope

Poems

By BENJ. GILBERT BROOKS.

Mid-Victorian Rhapsody.

The grandee, prim, magniloquent
Parades the foursquare London street :
Top hat tall as an ebony scroll,
Golden ostrich-plumes his whiskers . . .

. . . Snaky rocks
Shudder into the heavens : mid swaying pines
Blue limelight sweeps the pale sad countenances,
Passionate lovers, poised,
Stiffened like mediæval miniatures
Pre-Raphaelite, a-swoon.

The female set square slyly flaunts
White cap, frail shawl, black velvet coat ;
Her skirt, be-bustled, flowered and frilled,
(A silk trapezium) glides beneath.

Yet, hand in hand,
With cold moist lilies pacing
The forest's magic gloom, they gaze through depths
Of pool-like eyes and with sweet-bitter lips
Bewail their thwarted destinies :

While oriental domes conspire
To bless with mild benignities
Tall chimneys whose black billowing wads
Wave semaphores to mushroom trees.

Love blared and flared, wind-shrill, with rattling drums,
Pennons like flaunting skies, fifes burning bright
Like autumn moons ; blared, flared, and with the tramp
Of the feet, throb of the blood and foam-like shout
Of lips, marched, whirling through: and left a desolate
land . . .

Limp birds like broken aeroplanes,
Tottering over drear blanched plains.

Give me again red skies : carmine flashing on grey,
Like veins through old men's faces ; burn black vapours
Like passionate hair : ah me !

Pale boats, drifting across green glass :
Calm sea like icefields hung in vacuums.

"The Lord of Terrible Aspect."

Night, swarthy and frail amid strange flowers,
Brooding on seas like unsmooth glass,
Seas that lick flatly at the crashing pebbles,
Weakling and dumb. . . .

Strident from sombre, bale-born mists
A yelling red moon harrows up the sky,
Swinging his leash of light,
Hounding the pitiful waves against the sand,
With dire and amorous hand.

Oh ! see him rend the flower-like stars,
Blaze red to white, and dwindle
(Poor, insane, once potent Lord of Love)
Dwindle to pale flakes, withered autumn leaves,
Blown in the rifts of dawn.

An Historical Bride

By IRIS BARRY.

BASIL RIDDING'S tastes were in no way accidental. A long and costly process of education had fixed hereditary traits developed through the course of twelve hundred years.

He often meditated on the quality of his mother's personality. He would reflect, from time to time, on the atmosphere of that room in which he had for the last time seen her, whence she had made a delicate departure for another, surely equally well-ordered world. Lady Ridding had quitted the British Empire with all the assurance of Royalty, so well illustrated by the story of the great Queen whose eyes never turned to see if a chair were present ; who just sat down, when it was her will to be seated, as though the air itself would thicken into an obsequious seat if nothing more substantial were there. She was convinced that precedence is perpetuated, and that arrangements had been made on the astral plane for her punctual and polite reception.

She had seen Basil grow up calmly, and died satisfied. He had romped, more priggishly than eagerly, on the playing-fields where Waterloo was won ; breathed the dust of the sirocco, poked his long nose into a gaming-room or two, slid down an Alp and been drawn up a funiculaire, looked for crackelures in Amico di Sandros, used the word hyperæsthesia, read Flammarion on the Lido, Disraeli on a Cunard liner. He had felt most at home, out of England, in Boston and Provence.

Like many of his generation, Basil was a poet. This man of cultivation, of such birth and so rich, was something of a lion. Hostesses appreciated this. He surrounded his leisure with fairly beautiful and very old objects : French pictures, Sinetic jade. He roamed among these precious goods, showing them to interested visitors, keeping his one Poussin till last. He had an occupation, the bureaucratic one. At thirty-five he prepared to wed.

This, however, was one of the most difficult problems with which life ever presented him. He must, it was evident, marry beauty, race, culture. But the marriageable girls of his period seemed sadly out of their rôle. Not for them the dignity, the ineffable charm of the past to which they owed so much. Cruder strains of healthy blood imported by actress mammas, in fact a fastness, a bourgeois brightness and eagerness, rendered totally unsuitable for Basil's purpose such young females as circulated in his immediate neighbourhood.

Sometimes as often as every other day he strolled into the family picture-gallery and scrutinised with a blameless but reminiscently-incestuous zeal the serene and admirable features of his great-aunt Clotilda. That was the sort of wife he would like to find.

Back in London he prepared himself to devote all of what energy he had to this pursuit.

"Have you ever thought of Connemara, Grisel?" he asked his sister, who was pouring out his tea in the Elers drawing-room during the temporary absence at Dax of his great-aunt, president of his town establishment. "The West of Ireland provides, or should do, the necessary conditions. The middle-ages have entrenched themselves in the bogs of Connemara, so I hear, although I have never been there. Do you think it would be dangerous to go there just now? The inhabitants, I believe, are particularly inflamed against us at the moment. What do you think, Grisel?"

"Someone there might perhaps do, my poor Basil," she agreed. "But I'm a great believer myself in America. I believe all the best English stock is there, hidden away, but beautifully preserved. Colorado, the Mississippi, Richmond, Virginia: why not go and lecture on poetry in the Southern States and mix freely with some unsuspecting families?"

"I think I might do worse than scour Ireland first," he replied, selecting a cigarette from the unique four-handled tyg at his elbow, "for it is, I feel quite sure, the repository of vast stores of romance. You have only to read Yeats; Joyce again; Shaw too, I feel is nothing but a perverted romantic. All that may have influenced someone, somewhere, to be as I would have them. No?"

"It may be. Let us hope it has. But beware of pouring

your proposal into the wind-tanned ear of some sad-eyed peasant arriviste. For even in Ireland they are not quite all the daughters and sons of kings, you know."

"You do not understand me," Basil said a little crossly, "or the trouble I am prepared to take. It is not that she would be Irish. It is the clinging to tradition . . . "

"That is why I advise you to scour America," Grisel said. "They cling enough. There is no immediate hurry. Why tumble into a bog ? "

"I think I might go and look round," he said. "My future marriage appears to be not without difficulty. I must leave no stone unturned. First the rural parts of England. Scotland I strike out. The mists make them hoarse, and those who are not hoarse I have seen in town. I do not even boggle at a penniless miss, but she must have, oh, you know so well, Grisel, what she must have besides the appearance ; a restfulness, a suitability." He broke off.

Grisel picked up the woolwork firescreen she was engaged in embroidering. She felt she had said enough.

Basil disappeared into the gizzard of oldest England next day : visited half-forgotten collaterals and friends of the family, seeking among the dowagers, squires, even rectors (of high degree) for the woman destiny doubtless reserved him. Age-eaten carriages were brought out to sun themselves once more, and bear ladies for his scrutiny. Letters on costly paper written in crabbed script by withered white hands went this way and that, borne by page-boys : even by post. Lower than his own heaven he swam awhile among the impoverished-genteel. But here as elsewhere the old blood had paled.

Back in London he threw himself into necessary activities, attended councils, signed memoranda, sometimes attended to charities and organisations for keeping alive the moribund gratitude of the poor.

Then, one day, when he had almost decided to go to America, he went to a little tea-party at the house of the last but one Viennese ambassador's wife, an aged daughter of some vanished barony, on whose rheumatic left was seated a young person. As Basil advanced his hand to make contact with the claw of his hostess, he dropped a glance at the lady beside her.

"*So* good of you to come. *Too* charming," said old Lady Foksey, laying bare the long tusks of her race in a terrifying smile. "You do not know my little friend Aminta," she continued, seizing the stranger's wrist. "This is Sir Basil Ridding, pet," she said, "an old friend of mine. Talk to her, Ridding."

Basil gave one of his celebrated bows, which possessed all the best qualities of an eighteenth-century reverence without its blatancy. The girl, ever so languidly, raised her head, which was hidden by a rather shabby but elegant enshadowing hat of horsehair interwoven with jet. Her face became visible: lamb-white eyelids fringed in deep black lifted up to disclose brown eyes, quiet and mournfully vacant as a doe's. She smiled. Basil's heart experienced an unwonted irregularity of beat. He sat beside her, sipping tea and nibbling at a cinnamon cake, prepared to hope.

"Lady Foksey did not tell you my name," she said, gazing at him with those untroubled eyes. "It is Aminta Courtenay Przalika." She gracefully smoothed down some complication of her costume. The slowness and magnificence of her movements pleased him. She was tall, had a Gobelin face, long slender hands, pointed feet, and sat erect without stiffness. And, as they talked together, he found, too, that she was too much the real thing to chatter. Her conversation was distinctly restful.

Basil took his departure after an hour, and conveyed to Lady Foksey a desire on his sister's part to be allowed to visit her.

"A ravishing creature, Miss Przalika," he murmured before saying adieu to his hostess.

"She is the daughter of Countess Przalika, the morganatic wife of old King Caryl," Lady Foksey breathed: was it with menace?

"So!" exclaimed Basil, and made his way out. Miss Przalika's origin was more than he had reckoned on.

"Grisel," he said to his sister on entering his home, "I believe that I have at last met the future Lady Ridding." He related the encounter: she approved. Two days later she called on Lady Foksey, and, by a series of fragments of conversation with the old woman, contrived that Basil should

take Aminta in to dinner at a not inconsiderable function the following week. Lady Foksey understood perfectly. She was, indeed, able to congratulate herself on what had been, actually, her little scheme. Everything was prepared for Basil's further acquaintance with the heaven-sent bride.

The evening of the dinner-party arrived, Basil led Aminta to the dining-hall among the other guests invited by the famous political Duchess of —— to meet some almost important plenipotentiary. Aminta was robed in silver, which artfully conveyed a perverse assurance at once of her youth, her beauty and her distinction. After all, was she not some sort of royalty ?

" Yes," and " Oh, *yes*," she said to Basil during the first course. He noticed her appetite for *hors d'œuvres* was a little pronounced. Soup, fish, she accepted, entrées, roasts, game, sweets, ices and dessert went the same way, and she drank what must have amounted to a bottle and a half of wine. He was divided between surprise at her capacity for food and admiration for her indifferent, almost dreamy way of disposing of it. The Duchess, who, of course, had hardly eaten anything, already had a heightened colour, a strand of her hair had wandered from its jewelled bandeau. But Aminta looked as serene as before. And she did not attempt to interest him, or give him quick eye-glances : she did not gabble of the latest plays, or make epigrams with obvious enjoyment of her own wit, as girls he had met recently had done. She knew, thoroughly, in a royal way, that she *was* interesting. If she spoke more than to agree musically with him it was of far-off things, olden times. He was touched and delighted to find that she ignored the ingredients of the English cabinet, hardly seemed aware of a Republic in France. Gawaine and the Medicis, Charlemagne and Helen were more real to her than Ford or General Lawrence. She quoted John Suckling ; had never heard of, still less dipped into, the execrable Edwardian divagations of Proust. Some miracle had preserved her from any knowledge of events later than the middle of the nineteenth century : she had read nothing since Stendhal, whom she dubbed a flunkey. If one said " the Russians " to her, she fancied it was an allusion to the retreat from Moscow. The preoccupations of his stomach appreciated this back-reaching

perspective. Heaven he felt had most abundantly blessed him in causing his orbit so propitiously to cross that of the historical creature at his side.

Dinner over, he followed her out on to the balcony overlooking Carlton Terrace, where she stood looking aloft at the stars.

For a moment he wondered if she were real, or an ancestral apparition : until the recollection of the food she had ingested flashed into his mind. He conversed with her, expressed his admiration. Turning, she gave him a slow, gracious smile, but said nothing. He ventured to place a kiss on her arm. No doubt Lady Foksey had prepared her. She touched his hair with her other hand.

" You are unlike the Englishmen I have met," she said.

" And you are Queen of all the romance in the world," he replied, and enfolded her in his high-born arms. Although this was only their second meeting there seemed nothing for it but for them to unite their destinies. He placed a kiss on her perfectly turned, perhaps a trifle Hapsburgian, lip.

Some days later Basil's great-aunt Ridding, Lady Foksey, Grisel Ridding, and a very potent representative from the kingdom of Aminta's father foregathered, with solicitors hovering near, to discuss the approaching nuptials. Everything was arranged, the month for the marriage fixed, when Basil joined them. The great-aunt mentioned the word " portion."

" Ah," sighed the noble envoy, " that is a troubled question. His late Majesty did his best for the Countess : but extravagant habits, y'know—Mademoiselle has little."

" Mademoiselle," interrupted Basil, " is a treasury in herself. I snatch at her, even penniless."

" Ah ? " queried the envoy, casting a shrewd look at Basil. " But Mademoiselle has resources. She has written for some years," he continued.

" Written ? " Basil cried, aghast. " Written books ? For money ? " It was almost as though he had discovered she kept a boot-shop in Piccadilly. The envoy made a gesture, deprecatory, tradesmanlike. Old Lady Foksey blew a snort of disgust down her flaccid nostrils. But Grisel said quietly :

"Of course, once married, she would feel no necessity to pursue such a vocation?"

Lady Foksey cut in furiously: "Aminta is *too* romantic. Of course, her mother—still, we needn't go over all that. But the result is, Aminta seems to take our ancient associations too . . . well, crudely."

Basil let out a quick sigh. Was there a blight on the bride?

"She writes romances, you mean?"

"Oh, continually," the envoy replied. "A sort of Chaucerian prose, you know, allowing for the difference of language, something more than Morris and quite saleable."

"Ah!" This put a slightly better complexion on the journalistic habit.

"And of course, once married, I feel *sure* dear Aminta would not dream," remarked the envoy's wife, who had sat quietly by.

Other questions relative to the union were discussed. Great-aunt Ridding signified that she was prepared to retire. She had said little, as she was very deaf, and preferred not to meddle and make people shout.

Aminta was summoned.

Basil placed on her left hand a ring which Jane Seymour had given to a Ridding. She received the relic coolly, bent to kiss Grisel, her future sister-in-law. In spite of her appetite and her journalism, Basil felt almost certain that she was the most suitable woman he had ever met, or was ever likely to find.

Great-Aunt Ridding arranged a reception to announce the engagement. All the uncontaminated aristocracy, all the gravest and oldest gentry, the flower of foreign ambassadorial magnificence, and, with the easy ampleness of those who have nothing to fear, two "king-making" editors of newspapers, were bidden. Closed rooms of the town house were unshrouded, heirlooms brushed up, and some supernumerary domestics culled from outposts. Decorations of stiff early-Victorian bouquets in white paper-lace frills were chosen, as, through some little oversight in general training, no one remembered how Saxons, Stuarts and even Georgians had arranged such matters.

The hour approached: Great-Aunt Ridding took up her

station at the head of the Piedmontese staircase leading to the reception rooms, seated herself in an Elizabethan chair with petit-point seat, disposed her satins and ordered her Cluny headdress. Basil stood beside her.

Aminta was almost late for the ceremony, but her costume explained the delay. A mediæval gown fresh from Hanover Square (none of your French dressmaking for the chosen of the Riddings, dear no, why, that only dates from the Regency) : a long sheath of marvellously preserved or imitated Spitalfields brocade enfolded her, spreading at the ground to hide her pointed morocco shoon : a square-cut neck, long hand-shadowing sleeves of green : an embroidered lawn handkerchief in the left hand, and a coronet of her own abundant brown hair, dressed very high and full.

The guests mounted to greet the central figures of the group. Aminta received all congratulatory murmurs with great calm, just sufficiently suggestive of maidenly reserve. When everyone had arrived Great-Aunt Ridding began to rise from her chair : the guests remained stationary in elegant groups inside the first drawing-room, waiting for the old lady to indicate, on completing her surrection from the chair, that the hour had arrived to move towards a sort of Roman feast spread on porphyry tables in the third drawing-room. The old lady rose, slowly, stiffly. Basil stooped to offer a bended elbow. The guests, who were slightly thirsty, stood momentarily silent and motionless, all eyes focussed on the Riddings and Aminta. And then Aminta made a step forward to assist Great-Aunt on the other side. Her peculiar shoes hampered her a little, she caught one foot in the hem of her robe, made a rapid pace with the other foot to free herself, but stepped instead on the trailing fullness of her skirt, and, throwing up her arms like a suicide, plunged down the marble staircase. Breaths were caught, eyebrows rose, hands trembled a little, and Aminta continued to fall.

It was a terrible moment for Basil. Nothing like it had ever happened before in the whole twelve centuries of his family's history. The bride-elect was falling downstairs. His limbs froze, Great-Aunt, deprived of his assistance, dropped back heavily on the embroidered seat of her throne. The bride-elect was falling into the arms of two footmen.

Those costly and decorative machines had stepped smartly forward and presented themselves as buffers. Long experience in the clumsy stumblings of pantrymaids had prepared them for accidents of the kind. They caught Aminta neatly, and placed her, on her feet, on the mat. A loud groan burst from the moist lips of Basil, and he rushed down the stairs in pursuit.

"*Most* unfortunate," snapped Lady Foksey in the background.

"To be disregarded," retorted Great-Aunt firmly, rising unaided this time, under the stress of the moment.

"We will have some supper," she pronounced. *Noblesse* triumphed once more : the personages, without showing any particular emotion, stalked into the third drawing-room, and, secretly vowing it was *too* tiresome for the girl, spoke of hounds, of the Riviera, or of recent sales at Christie's.

Meanwhile Basil had swept Aminta impetuously into the empty breakfast-room, and, after assuring himself that she was unbroken, placed her in a saddle-bag chair and knelt at her feet. She looked pale, leant back, turning away her magnificent head. She knew too acutely what she had done. No commination had ever been prepared for an action like hers, so monstrous was it. It was impossible that people could fall downstairs, publicly. She leant back, closed her eyes, and waited for what Basil would say.

He read her thoughts.

"Aminta," he said, from his position on the hearthrug, "Aminta, I love you !"

The robust tones in which he made this singular remark were so unfamiliar, it seemed so unusual a thing for him to say, that she pushed back the white lids of her eyes and gazed at him in amazement.

Some incredible emotion had him by the throat. It almost unnerved him, for, while he realised with the utmost clarity that her precipitation down the stairs had certainly been mistaken and almost sinful, he also had to admit that the danger which she had momentarily run had ignited a strange and rather uncomfortable fire in his bosom. No, blame Aminta he could not. He gazed into her pale face, in which he was pleased to trace a likeness to her royal parent, with something that appeared positively to be adoration.

Had he not almost lost her ?

Had perhaps his family been only ever so little less distinguished, the footmen consequently a degree less automatic and trustworthy, she must certainly have been dashed to the ground.

Something of the old knightly fervour, dissipated though it was by generations of in-breeding, swept through him. Not his admiration for her magnificent total immersion in the Past, which hitherto had been her chief charm, could rival her loveableness just now immediately after the hour of danger. His eyes filled, he attempted to gather her in his arms fiercely and rapturously.

"I love you, dear, dearest Aminta," he cried. "When I saw you falling I realised it. Had it been another woman" (he shuddered at the idea) "who knows, I might have been shocked. But, I love you !"

He seemed quite unlike himself, a little like a sentimental commoner. Even the shade of a likeness was revolutionary. She gazed at him for a moment. Instinct came uppermost, got the better of her, commanded her to make the most of her very feminine hour, and gave her a shove into reality. She made a little murmuring sound, and, bending forward, attempted to hide her face on his shoulder like any dairymaid.

A moment or so later the pair ascended the Piedmontese staircase, and, her arm resting in his, entered the banqueting room. The tiniest suspicion of a coo of admiration rose from the entire gathering. Aminta was entirely unruffled, serene. The recollection of her unpremeditated flight was erased, thereupon, from human memory. Eating began.

The wedding took place some weeks later, appropriately enough in the 11th century chapel of Riddingsdale House. The rectors and dowagers, the tall equine daughters and over-dentated sons of allied families, and two personages sent to represent the successor to Aminta's great father (the successor was delighted to have her off his hands and had paid for the trousseau) filled the carved stalls of the antique edifice. A bishop presided, royalties sent gifts, the *Times* described it with dignity. Aminta, like a pillar of ivory in her parchment-coloured velvet gown and Mechlin veil, half swooned at the conclusion of the ceremony, a little compliment much appre-

ciated by the bridegroom. The honeymoon at the Ridding Dower House in Cheshire passed like the action of a stately dance. Aminta walked on the keep, fed the peacocks, and conversed gently, gently with her husband. They returned to London. Grisel and Great-Aunt had vacated the town-house, and the pair took up residence. Aminta proved a born hostess.

Basil never had to speak to her on the score of her former literary activities. They had ceased, vanished like the recollection of her accident. The passage of time proves it in every way a shrewd union. It is said, indeed, that Aminta will be the wife of a Governor-General before many years have elapsed.

The Reminiscences of Mme. F. M. Dostoevsky.

TRANSLATED BY S. S. KOTELIANSKY.

My Second and Subsequent Visits.*

ALTHOUGH there was comparatively little to copy out of the work dictated yesterday, I so wanted to write it in a clear hand that I arrived half an hour late. I found Dostoevsky in great agitation. "I was beginning to think," he said, "that you found work with me difficult, and that you would not wish to come any more; I did not write down your address even, and was afraid that what I had dictated to you yesterday might be lost." I apologised for being late, and said that if I were to stop working with him I should certainly let him know beforehand and return the dictated original. Dostoevsky began telling me that it was incumbent on him to finish the novel by November 1. "Meanwhile," he said, "I have not yet decided on the plan. I know that the length must be not less than seven folios of Stellovsky's editions; but what the novel is going to be like I don't know." To my question as to whether the novel was to appear in a monthly magazine, Dostoevsky gave me a detailed account of his business relations with Stellovsky, the publisher. The story was, indeed, a revolting one. It must be said that Dostoevsky owed much money; debts taken over by him after his brother's death and after his review *Epocha* had stopped publication. The debts were in bills, and the creditors worried Dostoevsky terribly; they threatened to seize upon his property and to put him in prison. The urgent debts he had to meet amounted to three thousand roubles, and he had been trying to find the money, but with no result. When all attempts to persuade the creditors to wait some time longer

* Continued from Vol. 1, No. 4.

had failed and Dostoevsky was driven almost to despair, then the publisher Stellovsky came forward with the offer to buy the copyright of all Dostoevsky's works to be published in three large volumes. For the copyright Stellovsky offered to pay 3,000 roubles, on condition that Dostoevsky gave him a new novel, of seven folios large size, in a two-columned page. Dostoevsky's position was critical, and he agreed to all conditions, only to save himself from the debtors' prison. The agreement was made in April, 1866, and Stellovsky deposited 3,000 roubles with a Notary Public to be paid to Dostoevsky's order. The three thousand roubles Dostoevsky handed over the very next day to the creditors. . . . Thus of 3,000 roubles obtained for his copyright Dostoevsky received no ready cash at all. But the most revolting thing was this : quite soon it became clear that the 3,000 roubles had passed again into Stellovsky's pocket. Having bought up for a mere trifle Dostoevsky's bills from the creditors, Stellovsky forced him to accept extremely bad terms. The price for the copyright of all Dostoevsky's works, three thousand roubles, was in itself scandalously small, in view of the success of Dostoevsky's novels, especially after the publication of *Crime and Punishment*. But the cruellest thing of all was the clause requiring Dostoevsky to deliver the new novel by November 1, 1866. In case of non-delivery Dostoevsky was to pay a heavy fine ; and should the novel not be delivered by December 1 of the same year he was to lose his copyright, which would pass then to Stellovsky in perpetuity. That man was a cunning and astute exploiter of our authors and musicians (as, for instance, of Pissemsky, Krestovsky, Glinka). He was always looking out for people who were in a difficult position and used to catch them in his net. I think that by stipulating for the delivery of the new novel at a fixed date, with a heavy fine for non-delivery, Stellovsky was certainly calculating on appropriating the copyright of Dostoevsky's books. Dostoevsky at that time had been absorbed by his work on *Crime and Punishment* (running as a serial then), and in view of the great interest aroused among the public, he wished to complete it to the best of his ability. And then to write ten folios of a new novel! Knowing the sickly state in which Dostoevsky nearly always was, Stellovsky counted on the chance that

he would not have the time nor the energy to execute two works simultaneously, and then, according to the agreement, he would acquire the copyright of Dostoevsky's works for ever. And it would certainly have happened had not God given Dostoevsky the strength to finish his new novel in time. That was the state of Dostoevsky's affairs then. He also told me that, as it seemed almost impossible to write the novel during that one month of October, his friends—Maikov, Milyukov and others—suggested that Dostoevsky should give them the plan of his novel, and each one of them would write a part of it, so that the three or four of them could manage to have it done in time. But Dostoevsky preferred paying a fine or even losing his copyright to signing his name to a work which he had not written.

However little I knew the world and its affairs at that time, yet that business of Stellovsky astonished and revolted me.

As usual, tea was brought in, and Dostoevsky began dictating. But he seemed to find it difficult to settle down. He often stopped, thought, asked me to read over what I had written, and after an hour he declared that he was tired and that we had better have a rest. We began talking, but Dostoevsky was perturbed and passed from one subject to another. He again asked me my name, and forgot it instantly ; twice he offered me cigarettes, although I had told him that I did not smoke. Then the conversation turned on the Russian authors who always interested me. Replying to my questions, Dostoevsky as it were put aside the thoughts that were besetting him and spoke calmly and even gaily. He spoke of Tourgenev as of a man of great talent ; he was only sorry that the latter lived for long intervals abroad, and therefore had forgotten Russia and Russian life. He spoke of Nekrasov, as of a friend of his young days, and placed his poetic gift very high. About Maikov he said that he considered him one of the wisest and best of men.

Dostoevsky began dictating, and became again irritable and perturbed. Evidently he found it hard to settle down to work. I explained it by his not being accustomed to dictating : hitherto he had written his works himself without the help of others. After four o'clock I was making ready to go home, and promised to bring a fair copy of that day's work. When

I was leaving Dostoevsky surprised me very much. He said : " What a large chignon you wear ; are not you ashamed to wear false hair ? " I said that I had no chignon, only my own thick, nice hair. Such a remark of his seemed to me strange and unceremonious. That day Dostoevsky gave me a ream of the thin mail paper with hardly visible lines, on which he usually wrote, and showed me what margins to leave.

Thus began and continued our work : I used to come at twelve and stay till four, and during those four hours he dictated to me for three half hours, sometimes more, and between the dictations we talked. With joy I began to observe that Dostoevsky was more and more getting used to the new way of writing, and that every day he seemed quieter. Especially was this seen when I counted the number of my written pages and compared them with a printed page of Stellovsky's edition ; after which I could say definitely the number of pages dictated to me. The growing number of pages greatly cheered and pleased Dostoevsky, and he would ask impatiently : " How many pages did we do yesterday ? " Our talks were many, and every day he unfolded before me a sad page of his life. A deep sympathy was stealing into my heart at his accounts of painful circumstances, of which he seems never to have been free, and from which he cannot free himself even now.

It also seemed strange to me that I never met any one of his family. I did not know of whom the family consisted (he did not speak of it, and I could not ask Fedosya, as Dostoevsky himself always saw me to the door). Yet one member* of his family, whom I took to be his cousin, I met, I believe, on the fourth day of my visits to Dostoevsky. I was just coming out of the gate when a young man stopped me. I recognised in him the dishevelled youth whom I had seen in the house during my first visit. Close to me he seemed more ungainly than at a distance : he had a swarthy, almost yellow complexion, black eyes with yellow pupils, thick curly hair and tobacco-stained teeth. " You don't recognise me," he said familiarly, " I saw you at my father's. (" So that is

* This was Pasha,—Dostoevsky's stepson, by his first marriage.

his son," I thought.) I do not want to come in during your work, but I am curious to know what shorthand is like, the more so as I myself am going to start learning it. Please," and without any ceremony he took my portfolio, opened it, and there in the street began examining my notes. I was so confused by that familiarity that I let him rummage among my papers. " It is a curious game," he said, as he handed back my portfolio.

During my three visits to Dostoevsky he appeared to me so kind and sympathetic that it seemed strange to me that such a nice man could have a son who was so free and easy and almost impudent. . . .

Between the dictations our conversations were quite lively. I ceased to fear the " famous author," and spoke to him frankly and freely, as I would talk to an old friend, or to my father. I asked him about various events in his life, and he readily gratified my curiosity. He told me fully of his imprisonment in the Peter and Paul Fortress, how he communicated with the other prisoners by knocking on the walls ; he spoke of his life when he was serving his term of hard labour, and of the convicts he had known there. Sometimes he complained of his difficult position, of his burdens, of his debts. He spoke of foreign countries, of his travels, of his meetings with various people. He told me of his Moscow relations, of whom he was very fond. He also told me that he had been married, that his wife had died two years ago, and he showed me her photograph. To tell the truth, I did not like her very much : she looked so old, terrifying, almost dead. Yet, as he told me, the photograph had been taken a year before her death.

But it turned out that all the stories told by Dostoevsky were sad ones. I was grieved that his life had been so bitter and hard. I once asked him : " Why do you recall only unfortunate events ? Why not tell me of your happiness, of how happy you have been ? "

" Of my happiness ? But I have never experienced happiness, I have always been waiting for it. I recently wrote to my friend Baron Wrangel that in spite of all the misfortunes that had befallen me I still dreamed of happiness ; that I dream of beginning a new life."

It was painful to hear that such a good and gifted man had never yet been happy, and now in his almost old days was dreaming of happiness !

He told me of the court he had paid to Anna Korvin-Krukovsky ; how she had given him her word to marry him, and how he had released her, for he found that, with their different convictions, they could not be happy. And he spoke of her a great deal as of a sensible, kindhearted and talented girl.

Once Dostoevsky told me that he was on the point of making one of these three decisions : to go to the East, to Constantinople and Jerusalem, and perhaps remain there for good, to marry someone, or to go abroad to play roulette and become a gambler. The attempt to solve these problems gave him a good deal of trouble, and he asked me what I thought would be the best solution. I said that if he had to make a choice between those three decisions the best thing he could do would be to choose marriage. " And do you think I could marry ? " he asked, " Or perhaps you think that nobody would marry me ? But whom should I choose : a sensible or a kind woman ? " " Certainly, a sensible one," I answered. " No, if I am to choose, I'd choose a kind one, so that she should love and cherish me," said Dostoevsky.

As we talked of marriage in general the conversation turned on my own case, and Dostoevsky asked me why I did not marry. I said that two men were paying me attentions, but I did not love either, I only respected them, and I should like to marry one whom I could love. Dostoevsky ardently supported my view that one ought to marry " for love," and that for a happy marriage " respect " alone was not enough.

Once, in the middle of October, when Dostoevsky was dictating to me, A. N. Maikov suddenly appeared in the doorway of the study. I had seen his portraits, and therefore recognised him at once. Entering, he remarked jocularly on the patriarchal way in which Dostoevsky lived : the door into the flat was half open, there was no servant about, and anyone could come in and take away the whole flat. Dostoevsky seemed to be pleased at Maikov's coming, and he introduced me at once as his zealous assistant, saying : " A. N. Maikov ; my zealous collaborator, Anna Gregorievna Snitkin."

I must not conceal the pleasure it gave me to hear Dostoevsky admitting and valuing my assistance. Hearing my name Maikov asked me if the late Snitkin was a relation of mine. Maikov was in a hurry to leave and said he did not want to interrupt our work. I suggested an interval for rest, in which I could copy out the dictation. Dostoevsky accepted the suggestion, and they both went into the next room, and stayed there talking about twenty minutes. Coming in to say good-bye to me, Maikov asked Dostoevsky to dictate something to me. Dostoevsky complied with his wish and dictated to me half a page of his novel. Immediately I read my notes aloud. Maikov examined the notes, and said : " No, I can't make that out."

Maikov produced a very pleasant impression on me. As a poet I had loved him before, and Dostoevsky's praise of him only strengthened my impression.

The longer the time went on the more Dostoevsky got into his stride. He no longer dictated to me monologues thought out at the time, as he did at the beginning. He worked at night, and dictated to me from his notes. At times he managed to write so much during the previous night that I had to sit at home late after midnight to copy out the dictation. But then with what triumph would I announce next day the growing number of pages ; and how pleased I was to see that my assurances that the work was progressing and would be ready in time, made Dostoevsky smile happily. Both Dostoevsky and myself entered into the life of the heroes of the new novel (*The Gambler*), and both he and myself had favourites and bugbears among the characters. My sympathies were with the grandmother who had gambled away a fortune, and also with Mr. Astley [the Englishman], and I despised Pauline and the hero of the novel, whom I could not forgive for his faintheartedness and his passion for gambling. . . . Dostoevsky, on the contrary, was on the side of the Gambler, and said that he himself had experienced many of his feelings and sensations. He assured me that one might possess a strong character and manifest this all one's life, and yet not have strength enough to conquer in oneself the passion for roulette. The characters of the novel became living people to us, and we argued about them. I often wondered at my

courage in expressing my views, as well as at the extraordinary indulgence with which the talented writer listened to my childish remarks and opinions. His indulgence to my words I attributed to his extraordinary kindness, and I felt deeply grateful to him.

During the three weeks of my work with Dostoevsky all my former interests had receded to the background. With Olkhin's permission I no longer went to his lectures, I saw very little of my friends. For the all important thing to me was the work for Dostoevsky and those most interesting conversations which we had during the intervals between dictations. I compared our conversations with the talks of the young people of my circle, and how empty and insignificant those talks appeared to me compared with the ever new subjects discussed in the conversations of my favourite author. Each time I left him I was under the impression of ideas new to me ; at home I felt sad and dull, and I lived in the expectation of my coming next meeting with Dostoevsky. I thought with sadness that our work was nearing completion, and with it would end our daily meetings. I realised what a blank my life would be when those interesting and animated conversations would be no longer open to me. And how surprised and delighted I was when Dostoevsky gave expression to the same idea that was worrying me.

Five days before the end of our work Dostoevsky said to me as I was leaving :

" You see, Anna Gregorievna, we have got to know one another ; we have met on friendly terms every day and got quite accustomed to talk together ; and now, when the work is over, all this will come to an end, and we shan't meet one another. Indeed, I shall be sorry ! I shall miss you. Where could I see you ? "

" But, Fiodor Mikhailovich," I said, " two mountains never come together, but two human beings may."

" But where ? " he asked.

" Well, in society, at the theatre, at concerts," I replied.

" But you know," he said, " that I go very rarely into society or to the theatre ; and what is the good of meeting in society when one sometimes can't say a word to another. Why don't you invite me to your house, to your family ? "

" Please do come, we shall be glad to see you. I only fear that you may find mother and myself uninteresting company.'

" When may I come ? " he asked.

" Well, we can fix the time when we have finished our work," I said. " Surely the work is the most important thing now."

One day, coming to Dostoevsky, I found him agitated. He had a fear lest Stellovsky, in order to put into operation the clause respecting the fine, might, on some cunning pretext, refuse to accept the manuscript. I began to reassure Dostoevsky, and promised him to inquire what was to be done in such a contingency. That same evening I asked mother to go and see a friend of hers, a lawyer. The latter advised that the manuscript should be delivered either to a Notary Public or to the police inspector of the district where Stellovsky resided, and that an official receipt should be taken for it.

On October 29 the last dictation took place : the novel *The Gambler* was finished. Thus, from October 4 to 29, in twenty-six days, a novel of seven folios, two-columned, Stellovsky edition, had been written.

Dostoevsky was very glad, and said that he wanted, on the safe delivery of the manuscript, to give a dinner at a restaurant to his friends (Maikov, Strakhov, Milyukov), and asked me to take part in the feast. He asked me if I had dined before at a restaurant. I said I had not. " But you will come to my dinner ? " he asked. " I want to drink the health of my dear collaborator. Indeed, without your help I could not have finished the novel in time. So you will come, won't you ? "

I said I would ask mother ; but in my own mind I decided not to go. I thought that with my shyness and lack of social experience I should cut a dull and silent figure, only spoiling the general merriment.

Next day, October 30, I came to Dostoevsky—not to work, but to hand over the copy of the dictation done the day before. Dostoevsky met me with particular warmth. When he saw me he got up to greet me, and I noticed that he even blushed. As usual, we counted the pages and were glad that there were so many. Dostoevsky wanted to go through the

novel to-day to get a general impression of it, to make a few corrections, so as to take it to Stellovsky next day. He then gave me the fifty roubles for my work, and shook my hand several times, thanking me for my collaboration. Then we talked a great deal and with animation.

I knew that October 30 was Dostoevsky's birthday, and therefore I decided to put on my silk lilac dress instead of the ordinary black costume. Dostoevsky, who had always seen me in mourning, was flattered by my attention, and said that lilac suited me very well, and that, owing to my train, I looked taller and more graceful. How pleased I was to hear his praise! But my pleasure was spoilt by the visit of Emily Dostoevsky, the widow of Dostoevsky's brother, who came to congratulate him. Emily Dostoevsky behaved to me in a dry and haughty manner, which surprised and even hurt me. Dostoevsky was displeased with the tone of his sister-in-law, and he became more cordial and attentive to me. He offered me a book that had just come out, and himself led Emily Doestovsky aside and began going through some papers with her. At that moment A. N. Maikov came in, He bowed to me, but evidently did not recognise me. Maikov asked Dostoevsky how the novel was getting on, but Dostoevsky, engaged in conversation with Emily Dostoevsky, gave no reply. Then I resolved to answer for Dostoevsky, and said that the novel was finished yesterday, and that I had just brought the last pages of the copy. Maikov then came up to me, held out his hand, and apologised for not having recognised me at once. He explained it by his being short-sighted, and also by the fact that in my black dress I had seemed to him shorter. Maikov began inquiring about the progress of the novel, and asked my opinion of it. I was fascinated by the new novel, which had become so dear to me, and I said that there were in it three characters (the grandmother, Mr. Astley and the enamoured General) extraordinary alive and good. I must have talked for quite twenty minutes so easily and freely to that dear and nice man. Emily Dostoevsky was somewhat surprised and even shocked that Maikov showed me so much attention and cordiality; yet she did not alter her dry tone, considering it beneath her dignity to regard with decent feeling a mere shorthand writer.

Maikov went away, and I was making ready to go, wishing no longer to contemplate Emily Dostoevsky's sour looks or to endure her haughty tone. Dostoevsky tried to persuade me to remain ; and wishing to smooth over the unpleasant impression caused by this meeting with his relation, he saw me to the hall and reminded me of my promise to invite him to our house.

I confirmed my promise. " When can I come to you—to-morrow ? " he asked.

" No, to-morrow I shall not be at home ; I have an engagement at my sister's," I replied.

" The day after to-morrow, then ? "

" No, I have a shorthand lesson."

" Then on the second of November ? "

" On Wednesday I am going to the theatre."

" Christ ! All your evenings seem to be occupied. Do you know, Anna Gregorievna, I think you say so on purpose, simply because you do not want me to come to see you. Tell me the truth."

" I assure you," I said, " we shall be glad to see you. Come on November 3, on Thursday evening about 7."

" Thursday ? What a long time to wait. I shall miss you ! " he said.

I took his words for a sweet compliment.

(*To be continued.*)

Right Readers and Wrong Readers.*

My Experiences with "Martin Arrowsmith."

By VERNON LEE, Litt.D.

I HAVE strung together these notes in answer to a request for more studies like those in my *Handling of Words*. This is not a review of *Martin Arrowsmith* in the sense of an account, for I take it that by this time everyone able to appreciate will have read Mr. Sinclair Lewis's amusing but also disconcertingly serious new book. Still less is this a criticism. For criticism, as hitherto practised, starts from the implicit assumption that the critic can tell the artist what he ought to have done and even what he intended to do; works of art and literature being judicable according to a code applied by the particular critic, all other codes being erroneous and responsible for the worst aberrations, indeed deduced from such. Now, rightly or wrongly, I am convinced that, except for a dozen or so precepts old and solid as the hills, against confusion, redundancy, anti-climax and similar wasting of the reader's attention, there can be extracted from this sort of criticism only one instructive item, namely the unintentionally conveyed information about the critic himself, his likings and dislikings. This, however, has considerable interest. Since, recognised for what it is, analysed and classified as such, it may help us to penetrate the *raison d'être* of all literature, by showing how various kinds of readers respond to various kinds of writers. For unless I have gone entirely astray in my *Handling of Words*, when the writer treats a subject, treats also sentences and parts of speech, let alone metaphors, and illustrations, in the way which is *his* way, referable to his temperament and habits, he is manipu-

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lating the reason, experience, emotions and imagination of his readers, each of whom (and the same is true of the artistic beholder or musical listener) will answer to this treatment according to *his* temperament and habits. Hence it becomes interesting to know how a given reader responds to a given writer; at all events it is the only kind of criticism which interests me. So, whenever I shall imply "Mr. Sinclair Lewis ought to have done this or not done that," this should be understood to mean "ought in order to meet the wishes and elicit the happiness of readers who happen to be *like me*." While his having done something by which I have been disappointed or annoyed, is a proof that (lack of skill being ruled out in this case) there are other people with likings and dislikings different from mine; at all events there is one such person of different literary wants and aims, namely Mr. Sinclair Lewis himself. And, should these preliminary remarks shock anyone as a nihilistic falling back on "De gustibus non est disputandum," I would answer that it is no good disputing (still less legislating!) about tastes before you have accounted for tastes, which you can do only after finding out what tastes there are. And the taste easiest for me to describe and understand is, at present, my own. So I set out to describe, and, if possible, understand, what happened to me, or rather *in me*, in relation to *Martin Arrowsmith*.

In this personal experience what strikes me first and last, is my difficulty with the chief, the only dramatic, incident in the book, namely the experiment on the plague-stricken islanders. This is not a sentimental, humanitarian difficulty; that would require my taking the business seriously. My difficulty is just that I feel it to be entirely cock-and-bull. I cannot swallow a scientific expedition which purposes to test an alleged antidote by giving it to only half of the islanders and seeing whether the other half will die for lack of it. I cannot swallow scientific men who solemnly believe that plague can be finally abolished by, and *only by* such a statistically exact experiment; scientific men who forget that the hope of escaping the plague would induce the majority of mankind to use even the most scientifically discredited, let alone imperfectly tested, specific, while the minority, the temperamental anti-vaccinationists, would go on and pooh-

pooh the test, questioning the statistics and ascribing even their own eventual death of plague not to lack of the antidote, but to dozens of other possibilities and impossibilities. Scientific men would never believe this nonsense about the test. And what concerns us at present, I refuse to believe in their believing it. Indeed, I should be all the better pleased if someone would write to say that the episode under discussion, so far from being an invention is taken with barely an alteration from p. 37 of *Beiträge Zur U.S.W. Jahrgang* XII, and that my venturing to call it " cock-and-bull " just shows, etc., etc.

What it *does* show is that I happen to feel it to be cock-and-bull. And my persistingly feeling it to be cock-and-bull (and not the greater or less credibility to other people) is part of my experience with *Martin Arrowsmith*; and will lead to some curious facts about the relations of Readers and Writers which are my sole concern at this moment. *Cock-and-bull*; please remark, and moreover suspected of having been invented solely to bring about a certain dramatic situation which the author did not see his way to bring about otherwise. And here I must remind you that the element of the *cock-and-bull* is plentiful in the literary masterpieces of all languages and not unknown elsewhere. Everyone who has written stories must be aware of several unwritten ones, plots and situations, of incomparable interest, pathos, humour, etc., which had to be reluctantly abandoned because they wouldn't hold water. Moreover, a number of other subjects so irresistibly tempting that we try to disguise their points of leakage; or recklessly embark on them without so much as bunging the holes (like some adventurous boys on a certain lake) with stolen apples. We trust to the friendly Reader baling out the water or being so entranced by the scenes we show him, as not to notice that a little more of improbability will submerge what Dante, when setting forth on a rather doubtful voyage, called *the little skiff of our mind.* Like Dante, we trust to the Reader's wish to believe. For however that may be in matters theological, there is among the fundamental facts of literary and artistic experience the certainty that we shall acquiesce whenever we greatly enjoy what we are being told or shown. Plenary indulgence is accorded

whenever our sympathising interest has been excited, and our admiration awakened ; whenever a work of art or literature (or a human creature re-fashioned by hero worship or love) offers release from the boredom of real life and admission into a seventh (or demi-semi !) heaven of unreality. When this has come to pass, and to make it is the artist's and poet's especial mission, we brook no interruptions to that bliss, and automatically push aside, " close our apprehension up " to anything which could check our interest or spoil our pleasure. Hence the very essence of a masterpiece is that, fulfilling as it does our heart's desire, what faults it has shall be unnoticed, or transfigured by our forgiveness into additional graces. And, as concerns novelists and playwrights, we invariably accept the hugest *cock-and-bulls* for the sake of what is made of them : think of all Shakespeare's damsels in male attire never once suspected by their nearest relations, his exchangeable pairs of lovers and entirely convertible villains ; think of that one and only pocket handkerchief (and never to be sent to the wash!) deciding poor Desdemona's doom. . . Has not the whole world and four centuries of it forgiven, swallowed these, not gnats, but full-fledged chimaeras ? Quite similarly, returning to Mr. Sinclair Lewis, two great empires-full of Readers and Reviewers, have swallowed like milk that episode of the statistical experiment practised (or not) on those plague-stricken islanders ; while there it is, still sticking in my throat, whenever I so much as think of *Martin Arrowsmith.* Now why ? For this *why* will be found to contain not merely an isolated fact concerning one Reader, to wit, myself, but the general law governing the relations of all Readers with all Writers.

The inquiry will be helped by comparisons with what is taking place in my case about another recent novel. I happen to be up in arms against my friend the *Affable Hawk* for daring to call attention to what he calls (forsooth!) improbabilities, *faults* ! in *The Constant Nymph.* Out upon thee ! Thou purblind critic, pedantically bent on the too-too natural blackbeetles and potato peel of realism ! Desist from breaking in on my perfect enjoyment of these lovely queer young people and lovely uncomfortable places (not Tyrol only, but that Genoese village) ; leave me to the enchantment of this blend of tender-

ness, drollery and pathetic youthful tragedy, romantic, musical, Mozartian . . . Respect, O thou who art named *Affable*, this meeting, full of gratitude and forgiveness, between the Right Reader and the Right Writer. Instead of which, in the case of *Martin Arrowsmith*, I am manifestly the Wrong Reader, the one who strains at a gnat ; the Reader who cannot forgive because he has not found what he expected.

What I did expect in *Martin Arrowsmith*, a novel described as having Science herself for sole heroine, was a renewal of the special imaginative emotion, possible perhaps only in the heart of an ignoramus, awakened by certain biographies of men of science, say that of Duclaux or Metchnikoff : very human figures, but, as I see them, watching by the loom of life with the archangels' song in their mortal ears. . . . Also, when I opened the parcel containing *Martin Arrowsmith*, there crowded reminiscences of what Besnard has painted in the *École de Pharmacie* : his field naturalists in the spring woods and geologists on the glacier ; moreover, the drugs and the knowledge elaborated in laboratory and lecture-room shown symbolically in the doctor reaching tensely for the glass into which the drops are counted out by the nurse, while his other arm props the girl fainting on her pillows ; and in the companion fresco the first outing of the convalescent, tottering beatific. Nor any less those visions of worlds remote in place and time which flit across the mind of his students of modern science : the sea-swamp whence all life has arisen, the jungle river where our forbears swung from tree to tree, the trampling mammoths and huge saurians playing in unnavigated seas. This was what, however vaguely and confusedly, I expected from *Martin Arrowsmith*. Instead I have been shown only pauper " cadavers " being dissected ; and trays of test tubes whose contents are but so many chemical formulæ except when we are told it is ulcerous pus fresh from the hospital. Even such things as these might awaken the emotion, solemn, *Lucretian*, left by the books of say, Loeb and Bateson, if the microbiology of *Martin Arrowsmith* dealt like them with the mysteries of life's origin and transmission. But nothing of the kind ! In order (I suspect) to lead up to the cock-and-bull business of the plague-stricken islanders and the statistical test, the researches of Martin (and his rather schematic,

allegorical teacher Gottlieb) are allowed to deal only with toxins and anti-toxins; and these latter, severally austerely unapplied by the true man of science. But applied, misapplied of course, only by disgraceful grotesque quacks. And it is with such potential quacks and mercenary *boosters*, at best with rowdy sawbones cramming for exams. between bouts of drunken horseplay, that, rather than with Besnard's audiences of grave youths fit for the *School of Athens*, Mr. Sinclair Lewis has peopled his American University.

Well, some other Reader of *Martin Arrowsmith* may here interrupt me: "Suppose that is exactly what an American University *is* filled with; nine-tenths at least of its inmates and the remaining tenth, personified by Martin Arrowsmith himself and his friend Terry in nine-tenths of their life and thoughts, namely when they are *not* absorbed in microbiology. And is it not rather splendid to think that from out of just such dull, 'boostful' or rowdy creatures as these real ones, science is ceaselessly elaborated in its healing purity, even as are the anti-toxins out of the cagefulls of inoculated guinea-pigs and the test tubes filled with pus?"

The reader who speaks like that is the Right Reader for *Martin Arrowsmith*. I am the wrong one. Wrong, because as I have been at such lengths to explain, the book has not given me what its subject had led me to expect: a sense of the greatness, the fascination of the particular science which Martin Arrowsmith preferred to love, ease and worldly advantage. And that this, as I would call it, this *Besnard-fresco*, or *Lucretian*, aspect of microbiology, should not have been shown by Mr. Sinclair Lewis's book, depends also upon something more essential than his choice of personages and *mise-en-scene*; upon yet another characteristic doubtless connected therewith in his scarcely conscious preferences. I mean his *style*. For unless I was mistaken in those studies of mine on the *Handling of Words*, every—shall we say heaven-born?—writer has an individual and, I believe, temperamental, hence unalterable manner of saying things. Moreover, and here is my point, a manner allowing him to treat some subjects so as to develop their full stature and significance, but inevitably distorting, withering up, other subjects. Whence I conclude that even had Mr. Sinclair Lewis wished to fulfil

the expectations of Readers as queer as myself and my kind, he could not have done it. Short of being a second Whitman, he could not have brought home to us the majestic attractiveness of science, its emotional appeal like that of mountain-peaks under the starlight, or of a Bach prelude on a great organ, while, as is the case in this new novel, he used up not the personages and background only, but also the language, all *boost* and *pep*,which had enabled him to make a masterpiece of *Babbitt*.

The Laugh

By BELLA COHEN.

MEYER lay on the bed, the covers drawn up over his mouth. His thin, long nose projected over the quilt seemed very long and wax-like ; and his eyes were closed. His feet stuck out beyond the edge of the bed, for Meyer was a tall man, and illness seemed to have stretched him out.

Hannah, his wife, stood near the bed, looking down upon him sorrowfully, her fingers patching her mouth.

" A man who has never been sick in his life to fall so sick. And he only fifty years old—the best years," she thought.

She turned from the bed and silently began to clean the rooms she and Meyer had lived in for the last eight years. Every now and then she stopped to look at the man in the bed.

" It seems so strange for him to be in the house with me and yet not say a word to me." Hannah spoke to herself. " I don't like that white sheet over the quilt."

Hannah carefully placed the broom in the corner near the stove and pattered over to the wooden trunk where she kept her red shawl. A close, layer-like smell of moth balls and unaired clothing lifted itself sluggishly and receded. The red shawl was near the top. It had white stripes and was made of sheep's fleece. Hannah had knitted and dyed the shawl when she was still young and wore a black plait down her back.

She placed the red shawl over the sick man's feet, but they persisted in sticking out—their long, misshapen toes digging into each other with soles as hard as leather. They stood up stiffly perpendicular.

Hannah looked at them and a strange terror gripped her. Her Meyer was sick. Her Meyer was very sick ! Desperately, she thought of the House. Perhaps she had better call Mrs. Brandt. Someone . . .

A knock sounded.

Hannah hurried to the door and opening it softly, looked up into the ruddy, round face of her sister Brahne.

" You ! " she cried delightedly. For a moment, the sadness left her eyes. She was no longer alone—all alone—for now, if only for a few moments, she had her sister with her. Someone of her own blood.

" Yes, here I am ! " And Brahne stepped into the room. Everything in it became dwarfed, for Brahne was large, large of feet, hands, head, mouth, teeth, and voice. By lifting her hand she could have flattened its palm on the ceiling as easily as she carried her twins on each hip.

The two looked at each other, for they had not seen each other for a year. Brahne had moved her bakery, her husband and children into a suburb, and Hannah, who could not ride in cars because it made her dizzy, did not visit her.

" Meyer is sick, very sick," Hannah finally said. Her hand went up to her mouth again.

Brahne turned to the bed and looked at the man.

" He doesn't seem so bad," she decided. " What is it, a cold ? "

" No, it's something more. The doctor wouldn't tell me. I think it's his heart."

" Heart ! That's how much you know about men."

Brahne seated herself and discoursed in bellows.

" Men are children. They don't know how to bear even a scratch on the finger. They get a little cold and right away they want to go to Coloraydo and get consumption. They want to be petted and fondled like a month-old baby. The more attention you give them the more they want. Many times I think to myself, why do they send men to fight in the wars when they are such weaklings ! "

Hannah listened meekly, her hand on her mouth.

" Maybe that's true what you say, Brahne," she offered timidly, " but Meyer is now laying like this the third week. And, you know, he's never been sick since we've been married."

The tears formed in her eyes and dropped down her cheeks.

Brahne's large, limpid eyes wandered from the sick man's face to his feet. The red shawl threw a new light into her eyes.

Hannah wiped the tears away as she mumbled :

" God should spare him for me. If he should die—"

" Die ! " scoffed Brahne, with difficulty shifting her eyes from the shawl to the man's face. " People don't die so fast."

The sick man stirred and the cover moved down from his mouth. He was smiling.

Brahne rose from her chair and walked heavily to the bed. She beckoned her sister.

" See ! " she said. " He's not sick. He's smiling. A man who sees Death doesn't smile, hah Meyer ? "

The sick man did not open his eyes nor move at all at the sound of his name. But the smile was still there.

" I could make him laugh ! " Brahne wagered.

" Laugh ! " her sister repeated, sadly. " What wouldn't I give to hear him laugh again ! "

Brahne looked at the red shawl, lips drawn in, one eye half shut.

" Well," she said finally, " would you give me the red shawl if I made him laugh ? "

Again the hand went up to the mouth, and Hannah considered. Brahne had always wanted that red shawl she knew.

She nodded.

" Yes," she finally assented. " But you must make him laugh."

Brahne leaned over the bed and tickled the soles of those stiff feet. A broad smile already stretched across her face.

" Hah, Meyer," she called out, " don't think you can fool me ! "

Again she trailed her large, square fingers over the calloused feet. A slight trembling took hold of the man. His toes began to wriggle stiffly—creakingly.

" Well, Meyer, how about a little laugh ? " Brahne called cheerfully. Hannah stood over her husband, her hand almost hiding her mouth. Now and then she looked at her sister.

Brahne bent to her task with determined lips. She no longer smiled. She wanted that red shawl. This time she played on the soles as if she were playing the piano. Then she changed to a quick tattoo. A weak, little gurgle issued from the parted lips of the man, but his eyes did not open.

"Well, Meyer," shouted Brahne. "You can do better than that!"

She tickled those stiff feet with the full vigour of her strong fingers. And, suddenly, the covers flew back and the red shawl dropped to the floor. A ringing laugh cut the silence of the room. The sick man laughed again and again like a hysterical girl, but his eyes never opened.

Brahne, her hands on her hips, joined in lustily, and even Hannah smiled tenderly and without sadness.

Suddenly the laugh broke into two and the man stiffened from head to toes. The lips drew themselves together slowly and painfully, and then they were still. The soul of Meyer had fled on the back of a laugh.

"Brahne!" Hannah screamed. "Brahne!"

"What's the matter?"

But Hannah had already fallen on her knees beside the bed, moaning:

"He is dead! My husband is dead! My husband is dead!"

Brahne, big and powerful, looked down upon the dead man and the weeping woman with a puzzled look in her stupid eyes.

"But anyway I made him laugh," she said. "The red shawl is mine."

Comments and Reviews

The Hudson Memorial.

Every now and then the envy of the mediocre finds an outlet in the persecution of some artist or writer of more than average intelligence. Mr. Shaw long ago beat the journalists into the cringing sanctimoniousness with which they now regard every word he utters, but two other of our most representative artists, Mr. Joyce and Mr. Epstein, either do not possess or do not wish to exploit that genius in controversy which is the life-blood of Mr. Shaw's art. It is, then, particularly agreeable to find Mr. Shaw lending the weight of his formidable dialectic to the side of the artist in the recent controversy over Mr. Epstein's panel in Hyde Park. It is to be hoped (it is in fact incredible that it should be otherwise), that his letter to *The Times* of June 19 should not restore sanity to the argument and that the editors of the popular daily Press, if they are not susceptible to a sense of personal decency and public responsibility, will at least fear to pronounce further on a question in which they have clearly made themselves ridiculous, and if the passage of time had granted that freedom of speech which is allowed to the historian commenting on the reviews of Endymion, we should add, infamous. "Fair comment" is an elastic term, but it must be clear to any fair-minded reader that the journalists would not have dared to comment on the reputation of a business man, a lawyer, or a medical specialist, with the scurrilous vulgarity of the recent campaign. But an artist is fair game to any sentimental ignoramus or copy-hunting reporter. The journalists, of course, are not alone to blame. Certain members of Parliament offended the dignity of the House by remarks of a startling imbecility. Natural obtuseness, though, is only to be pitied, and in technical criticism, we agree, a real artist neither expects nor desires any mercy. But, in a popular discussion, the parties being innocent of all technical knowledge, the debate necessarily descends to irrelevancies, and at its worst to personalities. In signed work, personalities bring their own responsibility; anonymously, they are unpardonable. It is against these aspects of the affair that we trust everyone will lend their influence. The responsible bodies of artistic opinion should use their support to counteract this attempt to diminish the reputation of an artist whose work does honour to whatever individual or institution which may be happy enough to possess an example of it.

Mr. Wolfe's Exhibition.

The exhibition of drawings and water-colours which Mr. Edward Wolfe is holding at the Mayor Gallery, 18, Cork Street, contains some very interesting work. His studies of café scenes and one or two of the landscapes have great qualities of movement and colour, but it is his drawings, perhaps, which show the more originality. In " The Garden " (41) he uses pen and ink very effectively, and the two drawings " Zara " (30) and " Study for Portrait " (35) show a strong sense of character. Mr. Wolfe is already known as a contributor to the London Group, but it is to be hoped that before long he will have an exhibition of his paintings.

Chekov the Dramatist.

" The Cherry Orchard " has at last been put on the English stage (it was produced by the Stage Society at a couple of matinees some years back), and the venture seems to have taken well. Those who were unable to see the play at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, may remedy the omission now that it has moved to the Royalty Theatre, and there, no doubt, those who have seen it will go to see it again. For no other modern play demands and is worth such sustained and repeated attention. Chekov is not an " easy " dramatist, and the difficulty of catching his delicate shades of meaning was not lessened by the manner of this production. Individually, the Oxford Players gave us sound, and at times imaginative, renderings of the characters. But, though the strings were all right, the instrument did not, to our mind, respond in an entirely satisfactory tone. There was a tendency to emphasise, perhaps even to mis-create, a conflict between romance and reality which is the most obvious reading of the dramatic situation. By this means, pathos is directed towards the romantic lady who owns the cherry orchard, and the exquisite harmony of the play is upset. The conventional emotional reactions are as remote from Chekov as the corresponding *clichès*. The importance of his innovation in technique is that it is his means of breaking with the " theatrical " play, so that his drama is all sensibility. Hence the danger of allowing the conceptions of the theatre, the most sentimental of training-grounds, to blur the simply poetic representation of Chekov the writer.

Trotsky on Literature.

In spite of a good deal of rodomontade about the future, when " the average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx," Trotsky's " Literature and Revolution " (Allen

and Unwin, 8s. 6d.) tells us a lot about contemporary affairs which is very much to the point. " It is silly, absurd, stupid to the highest degree, to pretend that art will remain indifferent to the convulsions of our epoch. The events are prepared by people, they are made by people, they fall upon people, and change these people. Art, directly or indirectly, affects the lives of the people who make or experience the events. This refers to all art, to the grandest as well as to the most intimate. . . A profound break in history, that is, a rearrangement of classes in society, shakes up individuality, establishes the perception of the fundamental problems of lyric poetry from a new angle. . . " This explains the profound boredom which afflicts the reader of so much modern work which is technically competent ; it simply is not alive in the world we are living in. Trotsky is a harsh critic of much so-called revolutionary art ; he does not let his doctrine or his faith blind him to the real questions of literary achievement. Of course there is much more propagandist comment than real criticism, but the book is lively reading and a good informal introduction to the politics of contemporary Russian literature.

The Pirandello Season at the New Oxford.

The production of Pirandello under his own direction, at the New Oxford, for which Mr. Cochrane is to be thanked, will be over by the time this note appears. During the fortnight four plays were staged, "Six Characters," "Henry IV," "Naked," and "Right you are if you think so" ; and this order denotes justly enough their respective values. It is unnatural to see acting as competent as that of the Compagnia del Teatro d'Arte di Roma on a London stage. Signor Ruggero Ruggeri's Henry IV was the most distinguished individual performance ; his talent is of the first order. " Henry IV " is a play of remarkable qualities, but Pirandello is liable in it to lose momentary command of his theme in vital passages, and the unity of effect in its presentation was largely due to the genius of this actor. The general acting of the company, however, is on a plane to which we are unfortunately unaccustomed. The " Six Characters " is one of the best stage plays of the generation, and it was given its full effect last week. It should become a popular classic when a year or two has sterilised it for British consumption.

A New Poem by Rimbaud.

Every now and then, out of somebody's heap of manuscripts, a new poem by Rimbaud is dragged into the light to astonish us with the proof that in his brief spell of creative activity he was as remarkable in productiveness as he was in intensity.

" Ce qu'on dit au Poète à propos de fleurs," which is the name of the latest discovery, was sent by Rimbaud to Théodore de Banville (among whose papers it was found) in July, 1871—that is to say, it precedes " Bateau Ivre " by a month or two at most. Already his disgust with " ideals," represented by the conventional flowers, finds an outlet in savage mockery. And is not the whole problem of his life summed up in the question asked by this stanza ?

> En somme, une Fleur, Romarin
> Ou Lys, vive ou morte, vaut-elle
> Un exrément d'oiseau marin ?
> Vaut-elle un seul pleur de chandelle ?

We have not yet been able to examine the facsimile of the manuscript included in the limited editions of the volume which contains this poem (Au Cœur de Verlaine et de Rimbaud, by Marcel Coulon. Le Livre. 12 frs.), but it is undoubtedly genuine. The author also discusses the authenticity of " Poison Perdu," a sonnet frequently attributed to Rimbaud but excluded, justly we think, from the definitive edition of his works published by *Mercure de France.*

A Scottish Publishing Enterprise.

The Porpoise Press, Edinburgh, hopes to assist the " cultural reawakening " of Scotland by a series of accurate reprints of the national classics. Besides accuracy, these editions will aim at tasteful, but not elaborate, production, and the first two volumes to be issued may certainly be commended for their appearance. These are : Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* and Robert Ferguson's *Scots Poems* and they are reasonably priced at six and nine shillings respectively.

Pamphlets.

As we go to press we receive a batch of pamphlets from the Hogarth Press—" Histriophone. A Dialogue on Dramatic Diction," by Bonamy Dobrée ; " Contemporary Techniques of Poetry," by Robert Graves (3s. 6d. each) ; " The Character of John Dryden " by Alan Lubbock ; " Fear and Politics," by Leonard Woolf. (2s. 6d. each) These represent an admirable endeavour to break the tyranny of the big book and avoid the disjunctiveness of volumes of reprinted articles. For the thrashing out of contemporary problems the pamphlet is of course the ideal form, and we hope that we may see the time when answering pamphlets follow thick upon each other's heels.

COUNT KEYSERLING SURVEYS THE WORLD.

THE TRAVEL DIARY OF A PHILOSOPHER. By COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING. Translated by T. HOLROYD REECE. Cape. 2 Vols. 36s.

BY BERTRAND RUSSELL.

COUNT KEYSERLING is a man of some eminence in post-war Germany, where he has a considerable following as a philosopher. He is one of those who are weary of European civilisation in its most modern form, and anxiously surveying the world for something less disgusting. In Germany, since the war, the number of these has grown enormously, and most of them turn to Asia for inspiration. In this Diary they can find much that harmonises with their mood, in spite of the fact that it was written before the outbreak of the war. The later part, it is true, was somewhat revised during the war, but there is no noticeable difference of tone. It says much for Count Keyserling that his reflections before the war do not seem like echoes from a bygone age ; this is more than can be said of most writers of general reflections on life and civilisation. It is necessary to appreciate his personal circumstances in order to understand his reactions ; for, though he aims at philosophic impartiality, complete success in this pursuit is not given to mortals, as he is quite aware. Until the aftermath of war dispossessed him, he was one of the German aristocratic landowners who formed a reactionary garrison in the Russian Baltic Provinces, now Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. This position ensured on his part a neutrality of feeling in the war, together with a singular blend of German culture and the Asiatic conservatism of the old Russian autocracy. This blend of East and West makes him unusually capable of understanding intimately the different civilisations of the world. In his travels, his method is to make himself always sympathetic and receptive in each new country. He tries to soak himself in its atmosphere until the thoughts that would be thought by a native arise in him spontaneously. This is certainly the right way for a philosopher to travel ; criticism should never be allowed to arise until after dramatic sympathy has been exercised to the full. In Ceylon, India, China, and the Pacific Islands, he practised his method without much difficulty. On his way from Honolulu to San Francisco he exerted himself to the utmost to produce a mood in which he would like America. In the Yosemite Valley, the Grand Cañon, and the Yellowstone Park, he was quite successful ; but at last a test came which was too severe :

" My friendly feeling has gone. Chicago is awful. All life is given over to mechanical regulation to such an extent that even the visitor surrenders himself unconsciously to it out of fear of perishing otherwise. And his instinct does not err ; the man who cannot, or will not, be an apparatus for a special function in Chicago, who is not ready to pledge the whole of his being to it, must perish."

It should be added that he got over this mood by the time he reached New York, which he admired as it deserves. Chicago alone, in the whole round world, was too much for his powers of sympathy.

While on the Pacific he analyses his feeling of hostility towards America, with a view to getting rid of it:

"It is not possible without loving surrender to understand anything at all; as long as the slightest inclination to criticism remains in the centre of consciousness, it is hopeless to do justice to what is strange. How can I manage to change my attitude fundamentally in the course of a brief week? I must undertake something like a psychological analysis. When I have found this out, and thereby the insufficiency of my aversion—for there is nothing which could objectively justify subjective contrariness—then I will no doubt be master of my undesirable mood."

The conclusion at which he arrives is that it is not America, but the West generally, that he really dislikes; and that the basis of his dislike is "the circumstance that all forms have become fluid to the Westerner." I think this is a just analysis of the most usual ground for preferring the East to the West. It leads to two reflections: one, that forms are rapidly becoming as fluid in the East as in the West; the other, that the love of fixed forms is essentially aesthetic, and belongs to the spectator's view of life. As to the first: I met in Peking a Hindoo who was Professor of Economics in the State University of Iowa; he was indignant at the usual view that India is a very religious country, and maintained that most of its inhabitants were materialistic rationalists. He was an extreme instance, but the West is producing more and more of his type among educated Indians. In China, there are more and more men and women whose culture is American, who regard the Confucian code of manners as we should regard that of a mediæval court. In Japan Western fluidity dominates the whole middle class; sooner or later revolution will make its domination universal. Therefore one who admires the East for the fixity of its forms, is like one who admires the West for its piety, or its aristocratic chivalry; he is admiring something which is rapidly disappearing, and which all the most vigorous elements in the countries concerned are doing their utmost to abolish.

With regard to the second point, that the love of fixed forms belongs to the spectator's view of life, this is only partially true. The aristocrat loves fixity because nothing else can secure the prolongation of his special privileges. Such motives, however, have not much influence upon the traveller. What he demands of a country is that it shall be intellectually interesting, and aesthetically satisfying. This is not what the inhabitants demand of it; they want it to be such as to give them personal happiness. This shows why the Asiatic admires America, while the European traveller admires Asia. Asia is superior to America as a spectacle; America

is superior to Asia as a machine for producing happiness in the inhabitants. This point of view is not developed by Count Keyserling, who, for all his dramatic sympathy and imagination, apparently despises *human* sympathy, by which I mean the desire that others should find the happiness they seek. If he felt this kind of sympathy, he would not rest so contentedly in an aristocratic outlook.

Count Keyserling is an advocate of the modern tendency to place psychology, in many respects, above physics. The most influential form of this tendency at the present day is psychoanalysis, concerning which he has not much to say. But his readiness to accept Indian magic and other Indian manifestations which most men of science would regard as superstitions, is explicable as springing from the same source. So is his comment on the exceptional capacity of Englishmen to resist tropical heat. Speaking of Ceylon, he says:

"It is interesting that Englishmen flourish pretty well here, in spite of the fact that they retain the British mode of life, which, as such, is the most unhealthy that can be imagined for the Tropics. The explanation, and at the same time a new proof of it, is, that the Britisher possesses, of all Europeans, the most concentrated powers of imagination."

This is a most surprising statement. My own view would be that the British flourish best in the Tropics owing to their habit of physical self-discipline, which is a product of Puritanism and public schools. The result is that they are more apt than other Europeans in the Tropics to take sufficient exercise, and to abstain from excess in alcohol—both far more important in hot climates than at home. But such an explanation is too homely for the modern mystic.

In other passages, the English are treated less politely. For instance:

"Whenever I meet one of the representatives of this people, I am shocked by the contrast between the dearth of their talents, the limitation of their horizon, and the measure of recognition which every one of them exacts from me, as from everybody else. Even the more eminent Englishmen (the really eminent remain, as everywhere else, beyond the confines of generalisation) can hardly be taken seriously as intellectuals. . . . They all think, feel, and act alike. There are no surprises in the inner life of any one of them. . . . The infinitely richer nature of the German has not yet found its form, and on this account he is not accepted anywhere unless there be some compelling reason."

Aristocratic feeling is a very vital element in Count Keyserling's reactions to the world. He considers Buddha superior to Christ, and attributes his superiority to the fact that he belonged to a ruling house. He is very happy with the rulers of Japan, for whom he has an unqualified admiration. He loves the knightly virtues of Old Japan. While in Kyoto he says:

"A feeling which 'resembles sorrow' steals over me. It is explicable enough: no matter how much I may be an intellectual, I feel, nevertheless, the fundamental instincts of the knight very vitally in me, and they no longer fit into this age. The days of the nobleman are numbered. What folly to see in this fact a sign of unqualified progress!"

Nostalgia for the past is the basis of his love of Asia; the things he loves in Asia will soon be as dead as the things he loves in mediæval Europe. In post-war Germany, love of Asia is often associated with politically radical opinions, because Asia is supposed to stand for pacificism and freedom from bureaucracy. These, however, are not the things that attract Count Keyserling; he finds the pacificism of Indian and Chinese sages slightly distasteful, and Japanese bureaucracy in no way repulsive. Intellectually, he apprehends what is good in Western ideals; temperamentally, it leaves him cold. Like the Neo-platonists, he struggles to preserve a dead excellence in a world which has decisively moved away from it. However just may be the standard of values of men who attempt a task of this sort, they are doomed to futility. Whether we like it or not, America stands nearest to the future of the world. To improve the world, it is necessary to develop through American ideals and organisation. Every age has its own merits, just as every country has; it is as impossible to transplant in time as in space. Industrialism and democracy may be barbaric for the moment; so was Christianity in the eyes of Marcus Aurelius. But it is the barbarism of growth, which time will cure. And the cure will not come through an attempt to keep alive what is moribund in the world of to-day.

A JAPANESE CLASSIC.

THE TALE OF GENJI. By LADY MURASAKI. Translated from the Japanese by ARTHUR WALEY. Allen & Unwin. 10s. 6d.

BY BERTRAM HIGGINS.

"The Tale of Genji" was written in Japan at the beginning of the eleventh century. This is the first English translation, and Mr. Waley expects the whole novel to occupy six volumes; a final volume will contain the authoress's Diary and a critical essay on her work and period.

The nine chapters given here introduce us to the boyhood and adolescence of the hero of this extraordinary tale. Genji is the son of the Emperor ("he lived it matters not when") and his concubine, Kiritsubo. The first chapter ushers him in, rather conventionally, with the slightly ironic hyperbole and mystifying "asides" of the courtly style in vogue at the time of Murasaki. His mother dies during his early childhood, her delicate spirit broken by the jealous persecutions of the Court ladies, and Genji

the illegitimate is cherished by the Emperor as his favourite son. "This, too, incurred the censure of many, but brought no enmity to the child himself; for his growing beauty and the charm of his disposition were a wonder and delight to all who met him. Indeed, many persons of ripe experience confessed themselves astounded that such a creature should actually have been born in these latter and degenerate days." The chronicle-cum-fairy tale mannerisms end with the chapter, and never reappear: henceforward the narrative blends an individual and most pointed description of the external event with a subjective method which anticipates many of the technical experiments of the European novel seven—indeed, nine—centuries later. But that initial encomium of Genji is in perfect tone with the development of his biography, which, for all its analytic sophistication and disillusioned appreciation of motive, is suffused with a peculiar entrancing idealism. Such a tone may be found in a few Western novelists, accompanying a similarly mature outlook on life; but it will be found only in those novels, like "The Idiot" and "The Brothers Karamazow," which are based on a conception of the heroic in human character. Genji is as far as maybe from the heroic; Lady Murasaki's sympathies are thoroughly socialised, her interest is in the amiable qualities. The convincing power of her idealisation of Genji can perhaps be partly accounted for by the exclusively aristocratic setting in which he is placed; there is no clash of social values in that community, and the insinuating artistry with which it is represented has the power to make its standards as absolute for the reader as for the inhabitants. Again, it is possible that the Oriental mind, obeying a logic which is at some points incomprehensible or antipathetic to the Occidental, has a different integrity from ours, and that romanticism there can exist with realism in relations that we should consider contradictory. But the most likely explanation, and one which would define the unique charm of the tale, is this: Lady Murasaki's treatment of life and character subordinates all curiosity about their value to an exploration of their beauty, and the choice being maintained with far less compromise than in the great literature of the West, the idealisation appeals to a part of the mind which is comparatively fresh to such an experience.

It is in this atmosphere of strange beauty that Genji thrives; and all the other figures in the book profit by it, in their degrees. Rapt from it into another climate, into the frame of English life, he would be as "caddish" as Dostoevsky's Myshkin would be maudlin. The ethics of Lady Murasaki's people are negative; the two tragic scenes of her story—the sudden death of Yugao at the moment when Genji's love is likely to atone for her past unhappiness, and the simultaneous humiliation of his mistress Rokujo and death of his unapproachable wife Asi—are ascribed to supernatural influences. (Mr. Waley says that "it is a fundamental thesis of the book that hate kills.") Genji acts entirely from impulse, but

his ingenuousness is guided by an admirable sensibility. The delightful scene in Chapter 2, where he discusses anecdotes of sexual experiences with his young friends, shows his plain-spokenness in intimacy : his conduct on more formal occasions is marked by an extraversion so refined and creative that its most frequent expression is the allusiveness of a quotation or an extempore poem. His love affairs, with which this first volume is mainly concerned, are varied with great subtlety, with the result that we get an introductory idea of the versatility of the writer's literary skill and at the same time an all-round impression of her subject's adolescent personality. Genji's enthusiastic temperament makes his loves eventful, and his profound natural sincerity, annotated by the unprejudicial worldliness of Murasaki, keeps the reader's interest in even his brief, wine-flushed encounter with the betrothed of the Heir-Apparent.

Mr. Waley's translation, from the bilingual point of view, is beyond the ordinary reviewer's criticism ; from the literary, it is almost beyond praise. His English adapts itself flawlessly, often brilliantly, to the demands of the narrative. He has purposely refrained from giving any information about Genji's future. Speculation has only the last chapter of the present volume to work on, in which there seem to be indications of a sterner purpose in Genji, and perhaps of a corresponding change of tone in Murasaki herself.

PICTURES OF EXPERIENCE.

THE METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN SCIENCE. By E. A. Burtt. Kegan Paul. 14s. net.

By J. W. N. Sullivan.

Nearly every kind of sustained and purposeful intellectual activity at the present day is influenced by that body of assumptions and theories that make up modern physics. Perhaps it would be better to say the assumptions " associated with " modern physics ; for it is these assumptions, regarded as metaphysical conclusions rather than as scientific tools, that influence modern thought. These assumptions may be variously described. We may say, for instance, that the universe may be completely described in terms of material particles moving about ; that everything that does not immediately present itself as that can be associated with it as an " effect," or as what Mr. Bertrand Russell calls an " outcome," when he says of man that " his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms." Or we may refuse, as any modern physicist would, to regard atoms as fundamental, or even, perhaps, space and time as fundamental, and substitute whatever final entities our analysis has reached at the moment. But all such descriptions are,

as it were, but local embodiments of the one great persistent assumption on which this philosophy, so far as it is connected with modern science, is based. That assumption may be described by saying that ultimate reality shall only be ascribed to entities capable of being treated mathematically. This assumption may, at times, issue in materialism—as long as particles of matter are the last terms of our analysis. It may, as it would for a philosophy based on relativity, issue in something not at all materialistic, as when space and time, as well as matter, is derived from an indefinable relation, the "interval" between indefinable "point-events." But the "interval" and "point-events" may be treated mathematically.

It has occurred to Professor Burtt to investigate the origin of this assumption, of this criterion of "reality," and the history of its steadily increasing popularity and prestige. This task is an important one, for this assumption, as we have said, influences every branch of thought. Even amongst scientific men, it is true, there are some who doubt whether the criterion is universally applicable; there are some biologists, for example, who regard "purpose" as a necessary conception in explaining the phenomena of life, and "purpose" probably cannot be treated mathematically. But when we find critics concerned with the deepest problems of art regretting our incomplete knowledge of the "nervous system," we see that the ideal of mathematical description, doubtless in a more or less vague form, does correspond to a very general aspiration. Yet there is no logical necessity for supposing that ultimate realities must be susceptible of mathematical treatment, and many minds find themselves able to dispense with this assumption. The whole outlook has a history; there have been periods when it did not exist, or, at least, was not general.

Professor Burtt thinks that the modern period began with Copernicus. Besides the dominant Aristotelianism of the later Middle Ages, there was also a neo-Platonism, a philosophy which considered mathematical harmonies of the first importance as a key to understanding the universe. Copernicus was definitely influenced by this dissenting movement. His avowed object in taking the sun instead of the earth as the centre of reference was to give a mathematically more harmonious description of the motions of the heavenly bodies. But there can be no doubt that he regarded this as more than a pleasing mathematical device. In obtaining these simple mathematical expressions, he was also unveiling the plan on which God had constructed the universe. But Copernicus probably did not rise to Kepler's conception of mathematical harmony as the *cause* of the observed facts. In refraining from making this step, Copernicus was nearer to the modern scientific outlook than was Kepler. A modern would agree that, other things being equal, the simplest mathematical description of the facts is the truest, but in saying this he would also probably be aware

that he was accepting a certain theory of truth. He would not agree that there is any *a priori* reason why mathematical harmonies should be discoverable in nature at all. But for Kepler not only was the only true knowledge the knowledge of mathematical relations, but the real world was a world of quantitative characteristics only. Such a man might easily have spent his life in inventing empty mathematical fantasies, and, as a matter of fact, he did invent a good many. But he was fully scientific, in the modern sense, in his insistence that mathematical hypotheses must be verified by observation. This criterion enabled him, out of a large number of wild speculations, to hit on his three laws of planetary motion.

The work, both of Copernicus and of Kepler, was geometrical; they did not give *dynamical* descriptions of phenomena. This was, indeed, impossible with the primary entities at their disposal. The notions of "mass" and "force" had first to be isolated. This was done by Galileo. A complete mathematical description of matter in motion now became possible. It might be thought that all that had now been accomplished was to show that the universe had an aspect that could be mathematically described. But for Galileo this aspect was the real world. Hence the emphatic distinction he made between primary and secondary qualities. Masses, velocities, forces, existed in a sense quite other than did sounds, sights, odours. These latter existences, according to Galileo, are "subjective," but figure, weight, motion are things that would remain "without the living animal." Professor Burtt takes us pretty thoroughly through the subsequent developments of this point of view. It is the point of view which leads to the theory that man's hopes and fears, etc., are somehow the result of "accidental collocations of atoms," and it has given rise to some of the most celebrated questions in philosophy. But, although the theory was developed, it can hardly be said to have become clearer. Some of the well-known enormous difficulties which attend it are pointed out by Professor Burtt in his concluding critical chapter. But it may be that the progress of science itself will make much of this criticism unnecessary. For the mathematical description of phenomena, in the terms adopted by Galileo and Newton, has been replaced by a more satisfactory mathematical description in terms of quite different entities. In the Newtonian philosophy mass, space, and time are fundamental. In the theory of relativity they are not fundamental. In relation to point-events and intervals they become, as it were, "secondary" qualities.

It is important, in relation to this discussion, to notice that, by taking a sufficient number of special hypotheses, Newton's general scheme can still be preserved. The great merit of Einstein's theory is its simplicity, and those who accept it are obeying the same impulse that led men to accept the Copernican theory. But if, like some of our older physicists, one experiences an unconquerable

aversion to the theory, one may still build up an equally comprehensive scheme in terms of the old entities. It would be a vastly more complicated scheme, and it would be deficient in aesthetic charm. But complexity and ugliness are not logical objections. It would appear, therefore, that a scientific theory involves logically arbitrary elements. Certain entities are selected, certain principles are adopted, and an orderly and coherent description, in these terms, of a certain region of experience, is attempted. It is open to anyone to endeavour to give a description of the same experiences in other terms. Which description we adopt will depend upon our mental habits and tastes. There seems to be no reason whatever why the appetite for mathematical simplicity should be taken as the key to ultimate reality. If, as mathematicians, we find that men are the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms, and if, as men, we find this conclusion intolerable, then we are simply reminded that we have other appetites than a yearning for mathematical simplicity. That the world has a mathematical aspect is almost certain ; that this aspect is somehow more " real " than any other there is no reason to believe.

The materialistic philosophy current until about ten years ago, and against which Professor Burtt's criticisms are directed, has no longer any scientific justification. Modern physics is not materialistic. This being the case, there seems to be no reason for clinging to a theory which, if not unintelligible, is at least open to the most formidable philosophic objections. The outrage done to our feelings by this theory is also an objection to it. It is not sufficient to attribute this sense of outrage to man's mistaken feeling of self-importance. The assumption is that man's feeling of self-importance is a mistake. But malicious interpretations are somehow supposed to be scientific by many people. There is supposed to be something hard-headed and robust, for instance, about explaining a work of art as a product of anal erotism. And professors of materialism, in expounding their extraordinary faith, lay great stress on their own unyielding and undaunted courage. All other men, by implication, are of softer stuff, and take refuge in cheap consolations. It is a relief to know that this unconvincing pose is not now required by science. We may conclude that our suspicion is justified that insensitiveness plays quite as great a part as the passion for truth in making materialism acceptable. With the decline of the materialistic philosophy, we may expect also a decline of the prestige now enjoyed by the cynical view of human nature. We may expect also a growing indifference to the findings of the common-sense school in the criticism of works of art. We shall probably be permitted to believe that the world is as wonderful as it seems to be. As helping to bring about this desirable result, Professor Burtt's book is to be commended.

MRS. DALLOWAY. By VIRGINIA WOOLF. Hogarth Press. 7s. 6d.

Mrs. Woolf has culture and intelligence ; she writes from a strong and genuine productive impulse ; her sensibility, when she does not force it, is fresh, individual and admirable in its kind ; for its expression she has developed a fastidious and accomplished technique ; and finally, in "Mrs. Dalloway" it is clear that what she intended to do, she has done, in the sense in which this statement holds truth. These are uncommon merits, they have gained Mrs. Woolf the reputation of what is called a distinguished writer, and their possession entitles her to criticism on her own standards.

"Mrs. Dalloway" is considerably the best book she has written ; in it her gifts achieve their full effect, and her capacity to say what she wants to is almost complete. How then, one asks, as the tide rises through her pages, can such talent coexist with a sentimentality that would be remarkable in a stockbroker, and inconceivable among educated people. Sentimentality is an interesting term, more liable to misconstruction than most ; and it is perhaps clearer to say of this novel that it is impossible to believe that if its author were asked directly whether the thoughts that pass during an hour through the head of any man of fifty bear any resemblance whatever to the soliloquies of Peter Walsh and other characters that fill her pages, her answer could differ from our own. This, however, is what we have to believe, with the result that in spite of, or on account of Mrs. Woolf's talent, her writing conveys an effect of automatism that is curious, and æsthetically corrupt. "Mrs. Dalloway" has the design, apparent intensity, and immediate aspect of a work of art, and it is an interesting problem of æsthetic psychology to explain so self-subsistent a mirage entirely unconnected with reality. This is not to say that falsity is inherent throughout Mrs. Woolf's writing. Her natural and unvitiated talent springs immediately from sensation, and her sensibility of this kind is rare and valuable. When she resists the virtuoso's temptation to expanded bravura pieces, her transcriptions of immediate sensation have the freshness, delicacy and vitality of direct perception, a quality that is not relative, and is sufficient in itself to distinguish her work from intelligent novel-writing. But here Mrs. Woolf's talent stops, in more senses than one. For this quality of direct sensational perception is precisely that of a child's, undisturbed by thought, feeling and other functions to be acquired in the course of its development as a social organism. And Mrs. Woolf is by no means entirely a child ; she is thoroughly involved in human relationships, which form moreover her subject matter as a novelist. But her essential reactions to them are a child's automatic reactions, who believes what he reads in a book, who believes life is what he is told it is, that some people are good and others bad—though bad ones are not to be found among persons he knows—who believes,

in short, in the absoluteness of his first social impressions as a group member. Together with this more essential Mrs. Woolf exists an intelligent, experienced and sensitive adult, whose business it is to justify her to the world. But these are unhallowed partnerships whose offspring, as I have said, are sentimentality and æsthetic corruption. When she leaves immediate impressions of experience, Mrs. Woolf's treatment of character and human relations is almost ludicrously devoid of psychological and aesthetic truth; as soon as she touches them she is as false as her rendering of impressions is true. The motives, thoughts and emotions she attributes to her characters have precisely as much and as little relation to the truth of life as the motives, thoughts and emotions postulated of the ideal person who forms its public by the daily paper. There are one or two exceptions to this, in particular the character of Septimus Warren Smith, where Mrs. Woolf rather shakily approaches imaginative truths; but most of the book, despite its pure and brilliant impressionism, is sentimental in conception and texture, and is accordingly æsthetically worthless. Such judgments, as is evident in this review, cannot be expressed in terms of purely literary criticism, which, indeed, is an instrument not applicable to the valuation of contemporary literature, as should be clear from experience and history.

J. F. Holms.

MY HEAD! MY HEAD! By Robert Graves. Martin Secker. 5s.

Mr. Graves has succeeded very well in writing his first prose romance, for he has given real movement and life to his conception of the two Old Testament stories of Elisha and the Shunamite woman and of Moses' leadership in the wilderness. In the former case the original framework is so slight that Mr. Graves has been able to use it truly, without coercion, to fit his needs, and his assumption that Elisha was the father of the woman's child is justified by the treatment. His further assumption, that the Shunamite woman was an intelligent, rather sceptical, but amicable critic of the Mosaic tradition is necessary for the interpolation of his rendering of that tradition. She is made to question Elisha as to the truth of the story told in the Pentateuch, in order that, with his replies, Mr. Graves may build up his own interpretation of the character of Moses, supposing quite plausibly that "Elisha . . . had the secret tradition of what took place at Sinai and Kadesh and elsewhere, in a direct line of confidence from Joshua."

The characterisation is straightforward and sufficient for the purpose of the tale, and the two principal figures, Moses and Elisha, though losing something of their heroic qualities, are represented fairly as types of practical men working in the interest of their

faith. Their own belief in Jah is unquestioned, and, being by nature leaders, it justifies them in the use they make of their intelligence and magical powers to govern and advise the people. It is with the problem of these magical powers that Mr. Graves is largely concerned, and here the vigour of his story sometimes fails. For, in spite of the discussion of the problem in the "Argument," he has not made the very necessary decision as to whether he shall treat the miracle rationalistically or with faith. He says there that "mere rationalism does not take one far"; and, after telling, from the rationalist point of view, the story of the Israelites who impiously lifted the veil of the ark and were punished with the plague, he adds that this presentation of the story does not satisfy him, and insists that the Israelites died because they knew they had committed sacrilege. He maintains that in cases of violation of taboo the offender, wherever he does not choose self-destruction, *does* die, "not by 'auto-suggestion,' or some such comfortable means," but by an accident connected with his offence. He then continues: "So in the case of Moses; to say, as the rationalists do, that his miracles were all mere tricks or lucky accidents unconnected with Jah is manifestly false, because Moses obviously believed in Jah, and was more loyal to him than to his friends and relatives, and with one exception . . . performed all his miracles in Jah's name. . . . Jah in the wilderness was a reality: Moses had seen him with his own eyes and had in turn passed on the vision to the congregation." This reasoning is weak, for there is no evidence that Moses had seen Jah (unless we accept the incident of the burning bush with the proviso that Mr. Graves makes in a foot-note), and it is further weakened by the narration of the trick which enabled Moses, with the help of petroleum springs, to show Jah to the people.

Mr. Graves's usual method, however, when confronted with a miracle in the original, is to treat it rationalistically and then to fit in this explanation with his own idealistic theory. But though he fails to do this in the instance referred to and in the case of Elisha's restoring the child to life, he does not spoil the effect of the story, for that depends rather on its total æsthetic coherence than on its philosophical content.

DOUGLAS GARMAN.

PIANO QUINTET. By E. SACKVILLE WEST. Heinemann. 7s. 6d. net.

One of the least fortunate results of popular education is that fiction has become popular too, and therefore both pretty and erotic. The fault lies in the fact that the emotional experiences of uneducated persons are universally associated with a desire for intimacy

with a member of the opposite sex, while at the same time the confusion into which at the moment the ethics of inter-sexual relationship are plunged makes it impossible for the artist who seeks immediate rewards to regard his anyhow important theme frankly or treat it exhaustively. On the one hand we have the optimist who flatters the Boy with tales of the Perfect Flapper or the Flapper with tales of the Perfect Boy. On the other hand, we have the more cynical sensationalist who, knowing that the appetite to which he panders is diseased, offers to his female readers the prospect of lustful Sheikhs, girl-beaters and artists, to his male sinful women miraculously redeemed by honest affection, or children initiated with no less pain than delicacy into knowledge of the symptoms of philoprogenitiveness. To the girl, Douglas Fairbanks with a darkened face. To the hobbledehoy, a choice between Mary Pickford and Pola Negri. At such a crisis of taste anyone who can find something to write about other than Love will be sure of a respectable welcome. Mr. Sackville West has attempted a theme even more troublesome than the sheerly non-erotic. He has tried to describe the relations of a strongly sexed woman with the other members of a musical party in which she is on tour, to give free expression to her lusts, and to reduce this . . . Libido . . . to its proper dimensions. One reading of "Piano Quintet" persuades one that Mr. West, had he only had more experience of novel writing, might have achieved a small, but brightly distinct, triumph. A second reading proves that Mr. West, however much better he might have been if he had been differently educated, is already good enough to command serious attention; and *that*, happily, has been awarded him. How far the speculations concerning Mr. West's meaning approach the truth is one question. What is wrong with Mr. West's art is another. It is the latter question that is the more important.

It seems as if Mr. West, with a very good story up his sleeve, had been afraid to let it out. The woman loves Aurelian, and Aurelian, like others of the quintet, loves the woman. But neither Aurelian nor anyone else is capable of the entire self-surrender which she in her pride demands. In two powerfully and exquisitely arranged conversations this antagonism—*amor contra mundum*—is discussed. In the rest of the book Mr. West imitates anything and anybody. Now he plays with the Pathetic Fallacy, striving to lend importance to accidents by assuring his readers that inorganic matter throbbed, thrilled, winked, blushed, flinched or smiled at what was happening in a way which Charles Dickens more entertainingly exhausted. Now he gives us scenes, such as that of the military tattoo, which bear no relation to his theme. He is terribly on tiptoe to be up to date. It would just be a joke if he therefore fell into the neo-Gothic manner of the seventies but the damage does not end there, for he has by his old-fashioned devices seriously impeded the progress of his tale, so that the

reader is more surprised than pleased to discover behind all this scaffolding ideas of real importance and rare poignancy. The best advice for the reader to take is to read "Piano Quintet" with patience, and the author to strive not again to try his readers' patience so far.

H. C. HARWOOD.

FISHMONGER'S FIDDLE. By A. E. COPPARD. Cape. 7s. 6d.

Of all contemporary short-story writers, Mr. Coppard is the most refreshing, for the simple reason that he takes less interest in himself than in what goes on round him. More often than not, a short story is written to release a mood or to put forward a thesis, and the subject matter is selected and made to fall in. Moreover, in a brief tale, the preservation of unity is a very ticklish affair; art abhors a compromise and prefers monotony to diversity. Joy is notoriously fleeting, but sorrow abides and is easy to convey; the moods of sorrow, disappointment and disillusion impose a ready-made unity in which all thought and objects of all thought appear coloured grey, like cats at night. Irony, too, is a great leveller, as are all the non-participating moods which look aslant upon or away from life. Just as melancholy means for the sufferer primarily a falling-off in diversity of interests, so for the melancholy-minded writer the manifestations of life lose their proper quality and become invested with dreariness or horror.

Mr. Coppard's resilient temperament is one of his chief assets; he will always be a good writer and some time, perhaps, a great one. At present he suffers from the defects of his qualities; he lacks intensity and the personal conviction by whose help writers much his inferiors in general level of achievement have here and there produced more memorable stories. Mr. Coppard realises, as many writers do not, that however much individuals suffer, the world goes on; that to insist upon an emotion is often to weaken its effect and tire the reader, and that ninety-nine times out of a hundred what passes for tragedy is either morbidity or sentimentality. We do not for a moment suggest that Mr. Coppard is always trying to achieve tragedy and failing. One subject may suit him better than another, but he has no failures. Nor has one any fault to find with the quality of his emotion. Only it is at times a little light in weight, a little diluted, wine mixed with water; at worst, it thins away into facetiousness, whimsicality, or into echoes of Hibernian English, that familiar substitute for the language of emotion. His stories drag their anchor, so to speak; their very buoyancy makes them stray, and though they are never garrulous, they do from time to time flirt with triviality.

But it would be misleading to press this criticism. For the few contemporary writers who might make Mr. Coppard appear trivial, there are scores whose work seems heavy to the point of

unreadability beside his. He can make a soufflé out of the most unpromising ingredients ; he can be comic without being artificial, farcical without being mechanical. He understands the lives of poor people, and portrays them from a central position, without prejudice and without sentimentality. Neither their goodness nor their badness comes as a shock to him ; he has no axes to grind, social or moral. Well served by an acute ear for the curiosities of provincial speech, he is at his best in sketches of the countryside, *Willie Waugh* and *Dumbledon Donkey*, their humour, sympathy and playfulness are delightful. In the longer pieces, he has the air of feeling his way ; they are excellent in detail, but they tend to hang fire. But when most exuberant and unrestrained, there is always a core of life, a creative stir in the heart of Mr. Coppard's stories.

L. P. HARTLEY.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. By LOUIS GOLDING. Chatto and Windus. 7s. 6d. net.

Brief mention was made in last month's issue of this surprising book, and more especially of the difficulties inherent in the theme adopted by Mr. Golding. But no apology should be required for returning to the discussion of a novel which, whatever its defects, is likely to survive in popular esteem ninety-nine per cent. of contemporary fiction, and which is intended to illustrate nothing less than the collision in modern times between Judaism and Christianity and the effects of that collision upon the son of its victims. Mr. Golding is himself a Jew, but, unlike many Jews and many Gentiles, neither sentimentalises nor despises his race. Simply as a historian of an English ghetto Mr. Golding shows himself here, as he did in "Forward from Babylon,' to be unequalled. If we remain unconvinced that he is yet able dramatically to illustrate the full extent of his thought upon a less limited theme, we must admit that his very failures are interesting. He has all the qualities of a first-rate novelist. What he has yet to attain is the technical ability wherewith to put these qualities into perfect balance.

The scene in which Eli confesses to his wife—that stern daughter of Israel—his apostacy is as nearly good as it could be made. It fires the reader's imagination, while it satisfies his intelligence. The quaint and crabbed ritual of Sabbath Eve is bathed in a really poetic beauty. Leah's tenderness to her husband, and his own forebodings of the wreck that his confession will cause, are delicately interwoven with the homely details of the feast. There is humour, too—not mere comic relief, but the humour that is the fruit of a sense of proportion ; and the indignation of the Gentile servant at Eli's conversion to something approximate to her own creed—at a respectable God-fearing Jew who went to synagogue as regularly as if it were to Mass, thus lowering himself to a blackly Protestant repudiation of ritual—brings upon the scene both refreshment

and illumination. Here, and here perhaps only, Mr. Golding attains to a serene mastery of his material and allows his readers the pure æsthetic pleasure to be derived from the contemplation of great art.

Elsewhere, however, Mr. Golding is less successful. The same qualities are there, but they are not happily wedded. The earnest excitement provoked in him by his imagination is thrown too crudely at the public. Consider, for example, these three passages : (1) " Hapless youth and maiden in your sequestered village upon the river bank, among your green meadows, under the lee of the pine woods, the years contract, the months are fewer, time is a chain of inexorable hours dragging as from a pit of doom the doleful day, the Day of Atonement." (2) " Lo, I have been in Aceldama " (Eli says)," even unto the potter's field, the field of blood. Go from me. Go from my side." (3) " Eli, the incomparable scholar out of Krovno by the Dneiper, became a carpenter for many a month and year—till a more potent preoccupation called him from his bench, as it had called another of the same race and mystery to the agony of the brickcroft and the spitting faces at street corners." These passages are not casually selected, but belong to definite crises in the narrative. More like them might be found. And what with all this apparatus of Jacobean tautology and Biblical reminiscence do they do except register, without communicating to the reader, the author's private emotion ? They are not art. They are attempts to replace art by rhetoric. And the sacred parallel to the sufferings of Eli—who in fact never claimed to be the Messiah—might more properly, one thinks, have been left to the reader's gumption. H. C. H.

STREAMERS WAVING. C. H. B. Kitchin. Hogarth Press. 6s. net.

" Your garden, Mr. Homfray, is so lovely that it hardly seems quite genuine."

" It is not genuine. It dates . . . . from Tuesday, when Winckworth's installed it."

This novel, too, has the air of brand-new installation. The arrangement is aggressively brilliant, but external, and lacks the easy inevitability of natural growth. In particular, the catastrophe, though extremely effective in itself and in the opportunity it provides for a display of virtuosity in the final chapter, is not a solution of the situation that has been created, but a highly spectacular demolishment of it.

There would be no complaint if, in the earlier chapters, Mr. Kitchin had not appeared to promise so much, or if Lydia Clame, the history of whose decline this book is, were less distinctly and sympathetically realised. That spinster of thirty years lives in Bloomsbury, but is " just the tiniest bit West, both spiritually and

geographically." Possessing sufficient, though not ample means, she " always seems to have just been doing something, or to be just going to do something. Never actually to be doing anything." In default of other occupation, she has cultivated a wit and a fastidious self-consciousness that are compensation for the sense of inferiority provoked by people of more animal vitality. Nevertheless, she must perish from spiritual starvation unless she can draw the necessary nourishment from a rather inaccessible Geoffrey. Probably she would not have succeeded, but then the story of her gradual decline *vers une mer glaciale*, would have been intensely interesting, and might have been tragic. Mr. Kitchin does not face the issue. With the same thunderbolt he destroys Miss Clame and the coherence of the attitude to life he had until then expressed.

The book is exhilaratingly written in a clear bright prose that only suffers from a redundance of thin epigram when Miss Clame's thoughts are being followed. The minor characters are seen and felt, and the *mise-en-scéne* is swiftly indicated. If Mr. Kitchin can write with less of an eye to immediate effect, his next novel should be thoroughly good.

C. H. R.

THE CRUISE OF THE NONA. By H. Belloc. Constable. 15s.

Mr. Belloc emphasises his conviction that books, " save here and there a piece of lyric verse, and here and there a good run of rhythm in half a page of prose," are not worth " one day's riding upon a horse or sailing upon the sea." Yet with surprising complacency he has just written another, of 347 pages, for no better reason than that this task had been set him. Such statements necessarily destroy one's belief in their author, for if a man have a boat and prefer sailing it to writing, he were better at sea than here pursuing " the most abominable of all trades." But one suspects that Mr. Belloc's intention is to sway his readers favourably by suggesting that he is, after all, a plain straight-forward man, one who enjoys life, and a sportsman, and for that reason to be trusted as a writer and a thinker. It seems probable that he counted on some such reaction in order to establish a pleasant, familiar relationship between himself and his reader—his " dear Maurice " or another—which would pass off his dogmatism as plain-speaking, his love of exercise as mental healthiness, the exploitation of his personality as literature.

This latter confusion is an increasing evil. The Johnson myth is swollen every publishing season with some new elaboration of " the Doctor's " personal idiosyncracies—his stockings become more wrinkled, his waistcoat dirtier—until Johnson the writer is eclipsed by the grotesque and fanciful conception of Johnson the Man of Letters. Such a transposition is a godsend to the hack writer, for in this way he is no longer obliged to concern himself

with ideas, but may content himself with loosing his *convictions* on the flood of a genial bluffness. It is something of this kind that Mr. Belloc does. The voyaging of the Nona leads him from subject to subject on which he wishes to pronounce, and there is always a storm, or Portland Race, or an unexpected breeze ready at hand to divert his attention and the reader's whenever it shall suit him. Thus no question is discussed fully and few interestingly. It is already common knowledge that Mr. Belloc is a Catholic, dislikes the Prussians, believes in aristocratic government, and looks upon politics as a dirty game. These convictions—it is his boast that he has no opinions, only convictions—gain nothing from being displayed discursively, and the manner in which they are expressed leads often to banality and sometimes to contradiction. At one moment when he is denouncing the "prolonged hesitation among the politicians, men by their petty trade unused to and unfit for tasks of magnitude," he says that war would not have come save for their lack of virility, but later he writes, "It is to the Dreyfus case that we owe the four years of war, 1914-1918." These two statements are typical of Mr. Belloc's manner of thinking; unless he proves some connection between them their value amounts to nothing.

It is so throughout the book. The haze of generalisations is occasionally pierced by an arbitrary conclusion or a half-statement bombastically proffered as a conviction. Those who admire Mr. Belloc will read him with pleasure, for they will be ready to associate themselves with the reiterated "I" and to accept the easy flow of his writing as a suave and able style. But others will be irritated and bored by the diffuseness, prolixity and tedium of the mind reflected faithfully in this prose.

D. M. G.

AXEL. By VILLIERS DE L'ISLE ADAM. Translated by H. P. R. FINBERG, with a Preface by W. B. YEATS. Jarrolds. £3 3s.

In making so sumptuous a shrine for this idol of declining romanticism there was the danger of drawing attention to the more perishable qualities in Villiers' work. He is not in the first rank of the writers of gorgeous passages; he added nothing, in that particular vein, to what had already been done by Chateaubriand, Hugo, the exotic Flaubert, even Gautier. His eloquence borders on the precious, like his social eccentricities, and though each is no doubt a perfectly genuine expression of his character, to the spectator the pose seems to be sustained at the cost of grace. "The fine gesture, at all events," was Villiers' reply to the insinuations of life and death, and what is best in "Axel" springs from that root. His fame is most likely to be assessed on the strength of "Axel" with a few *contes* and anecdotes as out-riders to his more elaborate triumph.

The play is certainly made to be read. As Mr. Yeats records in his preface, it was acted with effect in Paris in the early nineties, but its dramatic devices are so simple that their weight can be realised in the reading, and, on the other hand, there is a good deal of dialectic in the text which could not be fully appreciated in the theatre.

There is an essential difference between the drama of ideas, in which the characters and action illustrate or symbolise the author's conception of life, and the drama in which the dramatic quality is inseparable from the idea, is the idea itself. "Axel" belongs to the former kind, for we can imagine other ways in which the conflict between idealism and realism might be expressed, though not so well expressed. But there are no alternative renderings for "Hamlet," or even the "Cherry Orchard," since these are not made up of concepts, but are individual conceptions. The great merit of "Axel" is the vigour with which the characters and the dramatic situations to which they move, express the ideas from which they are born. Villiers' ideas are intelligent and disputable. His natural pride forced him to deny a world in whose affairs he could play only a menial part. In the post-Kantian idealistic philosophy, re-inforced by an older but similar current through Kabbalism and Rosicrucianism, he found a perfectly impregnable stronghold from which to defend his supreme gesture. "Live? Our servants will do that for us."

It is a Gothic ruin, in which certain pieces of fine workmanship —the initiation ceremony and, with reservations, the final scene—still command admiration but it is no longer habitable. Mr. Sturge Moore's decorations have a hieratic dignity which is in keeping with the spirit of the text. Mr. Finberg's rendering is faithful and, though a trifle stilted, more readable than many translations we have seen. One would have thought, though, that it was the three shilling and not the three guinea public which would be in need of translations from the French. E. R.

Among New Books

ESPALIER. By Sylvia Townsend Warner. Chatto & Windus, 5s.

Miss Warner's poems are emancipated and clean in diction, perceptive and witty, slight in substance but firm in texture. There is only one quality which her pleasing intelligence is unable to encompass and apply in this volume, and that is poetry's one thing needful, imaginative sincerity. No artifices or substitutes, however cunning, can make up for its lack; this second form of life is exclusive to those who can pay it the homage of an unqualified belief in its reality. The auxiliaries to Miss Warner's will to poetry are sometimes formidable, for she can ward off with neat idioms and a tasteful selection of tried expedients the periodical crises of inflation consequent on an equivocal compact between mind and language. But they mount later on, more blatant for the repression. "The Image," an attempt to recreate and modernise the ballad "Lord Rendell," jars on the reader's sensibility because, no fresh emotion being infused into the version, it alternates between parody and imitation.

"Take out, take out my winding sheet
From the press where it lies,
And borrow two pennies from my money-box
To put upon my eyes."

Isolated, that can be enjoyed as legitimate parody, but not in conjunction with the changed intention and flat virtuosity of this :—

"Why do you speak so loud, Mother?
I was almost asleep.
I thought the church bells were ringing
And the snow lay deep."

Miss Warner's talents as a writer make one hope that she will undertake the reorganisation of inner processes required of her as a poet.

HANG! By Frank Penn-Smith. Chatto and Windus. 6s.

The figures in all these tales (including the animal fables) are recognisably human. Though nothing very fundamental about them is revealed by the stress of circumstances, they are seen, against clearly suggested Australian or African backgrounds, sufficiently concrete and differentiated to engage the reader's sympathy. But sympathy—and words—Mr. Penn-Smith squanders recklessly in the attempt to extract from a situation more meaning than it contains. Lacking the ability to invent really significant incident, he is driven, whenever his story arises from the interplay of personalities, or the reaction of character to environment or event, to blur the effect by explanatory padding. Even the humorous stories suffer from prolixity. Yet Mr. Penn-Smith has a knack of genuinely comical observation that would benefit considerably if the writing were tighter.

GUITAR AND CONCERTINA. Poems by Gustav Fröding, translated by C. D. Locock. Allen and Unwin. 5s.

In his renderings of a selection from the work of the modern Swedish poet most popular in his own country, Mr. Locock shows very considerable agility. He has retained the original metres and the often complicated

rhyme-schemes—really he over-translates his original, which is the least common of translators' weaknesses. Though much of the "poetry" has inevitably disappeared, these very readable translations show that Fröding had a vigorous and responsive mind, and a thorough command of both his instruments.

CONTEMPORARY FRENCH LITERATURE. By René Lalou, translated by W. A. Bradley. Cape. 18s.

Names, reputations, and general tendencies are discussed in a way which is at least exciting. The reader cannot fail to be impressed by the tremendous literary activity which the book reflects, even if that activity seems to some extent a feverish one. Such a catholicity of response, from the poetry of Mallarmé and Valéry, as well as that of Romains and Claudel, from Bergson as well as Benda, Henri Bordeaux as well as Jean Giraudoux, indicates a sensibility which does not feel very deeply. None the less, if used with caution, the book may be found useful for those who wish to fill in gaps in their reading of the French literature of the last fifty years.

THE POEMS OF JOHN MILTON. Volume 1. Edited by H. J. C. Grierson. The Florence Press, Chatto and Windus. 12s. 6d.

This edition of Milton's poems has three points which commend it: its editor, its type, paper, and other details of production, and its very reasonable price.

Professor Grierson has adopted the arrangement which is common to the Florence Press editions of the poets, the absolute chronological order according to date of composition. The advantages of this plan in enabling us to follow the development of the poet's mind do not need to be underlined. The inclusion of Milton's Latin, Greek, and Italian poems in this order is, of course, essential, for they contain personal references which we do not find in the English poems. The type used throughout this series is one of the finest that has been designed for the printing of poetry.

The present volume contains all Milton's poems except "Paradise Lost," which will be issued separately in the autumn.

THE MOTHER'S RECOMPENSE. By Edith Wharton. Appleton, 7s. 6d.

It has become a commonplace of criticism to say that the art of Henry James tended continually to melodrama. Miss Edith Wharton, the most earnest and literal of his disciples, suddenly vindicates this theory. "The Mother's Recompense" is as gaudy as its title, though it contains the usual little circles of bright intersecting consciousnesses, still leaves no mildest emotion undescribed, and is written throughout with the old beautifully bland air. The plot hangs upon a threat of technical incest—the engagement of Kate Clephane's old lover to her daughter—and various attempts are made to make tragedy out of the alarm of the womenfolk as, in turn, they come into touch with the realisation of this central horror. A less able writer than Miss Wharton might, by giving less reality to his characters, or by contenting himself with one settled "viewpoint," have made a more credible novel. As it is one feels that she has wasted her excellent full-length portrait of Kate Clephane, and her brilliant snapshot of the New York clergyman-magnate.

SELECTED POEMS. By Siegfried Sassoon. Heinemann, 3s. 6d.

This 75-page volume contains no new poem by Mr. Sassoon, and it is rather a disappointing selection. There are examples from many periods of his work—two poems are dated 1908—but it is difficult to understand the principle on which he bases his choice. If it is historical, it would have been well to arrange the poems in chronological order; if, on the other hand, Mr. Sassoon's intention was to include only his best work, we must venture to

disagree, by the argument of comparison, with the exclusion of such poems as "The Imperfect Lover," "The Kiss," "Sporting Acquaintances" and "Prelude to an Unwritten Masterpiece." Mr. Sassoon was the most effective satirist in verse that the war produced; he must be credited with the invention of an original satiric style. Since then he has elaborated another form for the same purpose, and when these later poems shall have been collected out of the periodicals it ought to prove a very good occasion for a review of the whole urgent matter of satire—in particular, of the effects on the satirist of the changed beliefs about individual responsibility since the time of Pope.

THE WEEK-END BOOK. Nonesuch Press, 6s.

The second edition (eighth impression) of this original anthology, containing certain additions and improvements in the arrangement.

BETWEEN THE OLD WORLD AND THE NEW. By M. P. Willcocks. George Allen & Unwin. 12s. 6d.

Mr. Willcocks supports his opinion that the theory of Evolution was the rock on which the tide of human consciousness split into two currents, by deductions from literature. The three "prophets of the will," Goethe, Balzac, and Shelley foresaw a change, the working out of which was to find expression in the work of Butler, Whitman, Dostoevsky, and Hardy. Between these two groups are the typical Victorians—Tennyson, Eliot, Carlyle, etc.—who fixed their eyes on the glorious promise of what was to be; those who escaped this complacency, Browning, the Brontës and Meredith; and those who wrecked this complacency, Tolstoi, Chekoo, Ibsen and France. Mr. Willcocks sees in this changed attitude towards experience, "an attempt to gather into one expression the whole universe of manifested life," an effort to build "the future religion of humanity, which will concern itself entirely with the unfolding of the Life Force, or Immanent Will."

If one could penetrate behind the palisade of hyperbole one might find Mr. Willcock's ideas more interesting, but his continual over-emphasis detracts from the value of his thesis and the arguments with which he supports it.

HERBERT TRENCH. *Notice sur sa Vie et ses Oeuvres.* Par Abel Chevally, *avec texte et traduction de son poème,* "La Bataille de la Marne." Oxford University Press and Les Presses Universitaires de France. 1s.

In a three-page introduction to this pamphlet M. Chevally makes one of those bursts of lyrical journalism with which the French are apt to salute writers whom they cannot commend with their minds. He has made the translation because Trench expressed a wish that it should be done, but also because "L'hommage enflammé que Trench a rendu par ce poème a la France et ses destins . . . mérite en tout cas, à défaut d'admiration littéraire, un témoignage de reconnaissance et d'appréciation." M. Chevally has not succeeded in adding to Trench's reputation as a poet, but he has given a faithful translation which occasionally improves on the original in point of diction.